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[GOLDEN TIDINGS.]

ALICE DESMOND'S TROTH.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"That Young Person," "Why She Forsook Him," &c. &c.

CHAPTER III.

A VISITOR.

Thou know'st 'tis common: all that lives must die,
Passing from nature to eternity. SHAKESPEARE.

REVERENTLY Alice Desmond folded the papers, writing on a blank space at the end of her mother's letter to Mr. Marston, in a trembling hand:

"My mother died this afternoon. Her last act was to write this letter, which she wished sent to you."

Then she fastened the envelope, sealed it, and gave it reluctantly to Martha.

"It seems cruel that her last letter should be for a stranger."

"Miss Alice, dear, you'll see the doctor, won't you, when he comes?"

"I suppose I must, Martha; it is cruel of him to ask it; he must know what I am suffering."

"He means kindly, miss."

She looks wearily round the room.

"My home for twelve years—my home no longer. I shall have to go away now, Martha. I am very poor."

Incredible though it may seem, she never thought of William Gordon and her promise to be his wife; that promise had been given only for her mother's sake, and now her mother was beyond any human care it passed from her mind.

She did not love the artist; she had worshipped her mother; a month ago she had never seen him; all her eighteen years she had clung to her mother; little wonder Gordon was forgotten in her grief.

The doctor came presently. Martha ushered him into the little parlour, and then withdrew; with all her love for Alice, she yet never forgot to show her all the respect she had lavished on her late mistress.

Doctor Grant saw Miss Desmond utterly broken down with grief; she had wept till she could weep no longer.

She looked as though she had been ill for weeks; her face was deadly pale, and there were dark circles round her eyes.

"I am very sorry for you, Miss Desmond. I little expected your poor mother would be taken so suddenly."

"I was not with her," said Alice, sadly. "I think if I had only been with her I should feel happier."

"Would you like me to write to your friends?"

"I have no friend in the world but Martha."

"Martha is very good and faithful, but she is no fitting guardian for a young lady."

"She is all I have."

"Is there no one in the village I could send

to be with you till the funeral. You ought not to be alone."

"I could not bear a stranger even if one would come. Dr. Grant, Martha said you would manage things for me."

"Willingly, Miss Desmond. Believe me, I shall only be too glad to spare you any trouble."

"I should like it to be underneath the yew-tree near the churchyard hedge."

He understood her and bowed his head.

"There will only be Martha and me. Oh!" with a heavy sob, "why cannot I die too? How shall I ever come back from the churchyard and leave her there?"

"You are very young," remarked Dr. Grant, placidly; "time will soften your grief."

"I think not; no one can fill a mother's place, and she was all I had—my very all."

"Pardon me; surely Mrs. Desmond must have left some will—some directions for your future plans. You are only a minor; it is quite impossible you can take care of yourself."

"I have Martha; she will take care of me."

"Shall you stay here?"

"I think not," with that strange frankness which seemed so entirely her nature. "I cannot afford it; we must go to some town where Martha and I can work to keep ourselves. We could get nothing to do in Ashton."

"I am very sorry to hear this. I had thought Mrs. Desmond's income would come to you."

"I believe not."

"Surely some of your father's family befriend you."

"Mamma could never bear to speak father, so I don't know about his friends. Alice, simply; then her voice taking a

ring, she added, "I would rather work for my bread than beg it even of relations."

"Work is hard lines for any woman, specially the young, and you, Miss Desmond, are certainly not fitted for it."

"Why not?"

He paused; he could hardly say the truth:

"Few would care to be outshone by engaging one so beautiful as their companion, and mothers have a peculiar objection to good looks in their children's governess." Instead, he said, constrainedly:

"I hope I may be mistaken. I will not intrude on you further, Miss Desmond, I am sure you need rest, and your good Martha must take care of you, and if I can serve you in any way do not scruple to send for me."

"I thank you."

Two days passed; in three more would come the funeral, and then Alice and Martha would soon leave Ashton, and seek their fortune in a distant town; they were sad and sorrowful days; the women shed tears over the black dresses, whose unking at every stitch reminded them of their sorrow.

"Martha," Alice Desmond asked, once, "you will stay with me, won't you?"

"I'll never leave you, Miss Alice dear, till you send me away."

"I am very poor, Martha."

"That don't matter, Miss Alice; I can work too. I'll never desert your mother's child."

"We shall have enough to pay all here, Martha, I am glad of that."

"And what will you do, Miss Alice?"

"I must try to sell my sketches, or perhaps I could get some pupils, Martha. The hardest task is that all I do must be for myself; it is too late to help dear mamma now."

Vividly, in every detail, had come back to her now that afternoon in the wood. She knew William Gordon would return and claim her for his wife, but her whole soul recoiled at the thought.

"I will never marry him—never. It was he who kept me from my mother, and made me miss her last words. I could not bear the sight of him. I will get away with Martha before he comes back. He will soon forget me when he finds me gone. I will never marry anyone at all."

"You have the mistress's jewels, Miss Alice," remarked Martha, breaking a long silence.

"I could never part with them. We must take them with us, and our picture and books. Doctor Grant has found someone who will be very glad to take our cottage and the furniture just as it stands; it's very hard to leave the dear old things, but we want the money for them, or we should be in debt."

"The doctor's very kind, Miss Alice, very. And he's a handsome man, too, if he wasn't so old."

"He isn't very old."

"Too old for you, Miss Alice, or else——"

"Martha, don't make such plans. I shall never marry any man, and I hate Ashton; I never could spend my life here."

"Your mother loved it, Miss Alice."

"Mother was tired of her life—so tired, that she chose Ashton for its dullness. I don't know what life is, only that I've got to spend all mine without her."

"Her troubles are over now."

"Yes. Some day, Martha, won't you tell me how you first came to know my mother?"

"Indeed I will, Miss Alice, and now if you like."

"I do like, Martha."

"I married young, Miss Alice, when I wasn't much older than you are now, and my good man was a sailor; there's plenty of sorrow for a sailor's wife. My Jim was the brightest, bravest lad, and everyone thought me a lucky girl when I married him. They didn't think so, Miss Alice, when a matter of twelve years after his ship went down and he with it. I had children, and I went home to my father's, my old place there was filled up; my sisters, women grown, and my sad, tired face led them after a bit, and I saw I was one many there. I said I'd go to service, but I

hadn't been brought up to it, and people thought I was dull and mopish, and were shy to try me."

"One day I met your father; he was our landlord and a deal the village thought of him. He and my Jim had played together as boys. I up and told him my trouble; he'd always a kind word ready. 'Get your things together, Martha, and I'll find you a place worth twenty of those who refuse you.'"

"And the place was?"

"To wait on your mother, dear, she was just married then, and as beautiful as an angel."

"Hark! who can that be, Martha?"

A loud double knock had sounded; strange event in that humble home.

Martha calmly gathered the needle work together, and carried it out of sight, put a tidying touch on two or three things about the room, and then walked to the door just as the knocker descended for the second time.

She came back grave and surprised, bearing a card inscribed with the name of Mr. Edward Marston.

"He wishes to see you particularly, miss."

"Can't he tell you what he wants, Martha?"

"No, his business is private, Miss Alice dear," with strange agitation in her voice. "I'm sure the mistress would have wished you to see this gentleman."

That settled the matter.

"Ask him in here, please, Martha."

CHAPTER IV.

GREAT NEWS.

"Is but fortune—all is fortune;
What should I think on it?"

TWENTY-NINE.

MR. EDWARD MARSTON was a grave, thoughtful-looking man of about fifty; he bowed to Alice Desmond with respectful interest, and as he took the seat she offered him, his eyes involuntarily stole round the room in surprise at finding her amid such surroundings.

"Miss Desmond, I must apologise for intruding upon you at such a time, but I have the honour to be appointed as your guardian by your late father's Will."

Miss Desmond inclined her head, a strange solemnity oppressed her; the mystery which had shadowed her mother's life was at length about to be confided to her.

"Your mother received from me the news of her husband's death two days ago. She wrote to me accepting me as the guardian appointed by his Will for her child, and telling me her daughter had been brought up in entire ignorance of her family history."

"I have lived here twelve years with my mother," interrupted Alice. "I do not remember any other relation. I have never been told about my father. Why did he let my mother live hidden here? Why did he stay away from us?"

"It is a sad history and will, I fear, pain you much in the recital."

"I can surely bear to hear, sir, that which my mother loved to suffer. Did you know my father?"

"I knew him from his earliest youth. My father was his lordship's solicitor, a post which later on it was my honour to fill."

"Then was he a lord, and my mother plain Mrs. Desmond?"

"Your mother was not Mrs. Desmond. She may have taken that name, but from the day of her marriage she was Countess of Ashley. She was the daughter of a small retail tradesman. Your father met her by accident, fell in love with her, and, charmed by her beauty, married her."

"And were they happy?"

"Such unequal marriages rarely are happy, my dear young lady. Your mother, herself, was singularly refined, and fitted to adorn any station, but her family were far from congenial companions to your father; his sensitive nature

was antagonistic to the common-place vulgarity of their minds."

"My mother was a lady, sir," interposed Alice, haughtily.

"As true a lady as ever I met, but her relations were just the average of their class. She herself never was really one of them, she had been brought up entirely by her godmother, a person far her parents' superior in rank. She only returned home at this lady's death, and a sad, lonely life she led there, until chance brought her under your father's notice."

"And then?"

"He married her, for men will risk a great deal for faces such as hers; besides he had remarked the want of sympathy between her and her family, he hoped she would forsake them utterly."

"And she did not?"

"They would not be forsaken, their daughter, the Countess, speedily became the old people's favourite child; they intruded on her and her husband at all times. Three months after the marriage, Lord and Lady Ashley went abroad simply to escape from their relations."

"I was born abroad, Martha told me that."

"You were born in Florence. For three years your parents lived in perfect harmony, then business relating to his estates recalled the earl to England, he took with him his wife and child. The villa at Florence was dismantled. England henceforth was to be their home; it was tacitly understood between your father and mother that she was to hold no intercourse with her own family, but, unfortunately, the public papers announced the approaching return of the earl, and his unwelcome relations by marriage, hearing of it, your grandmother, one of her sons and his wife went down to Ashley Park to welcome home the wanderers."

"No instructions had been received by the servants; they were fully aware their master had married beneath him, and when the Gibsons presented themselves at the Park the housekeeper considered it her duty to admit them."

"Old Mrs. Gibson, her son and daughter-in-law established themselves at the Park; half educated and thoroughly underbred, they speedily became the laughing-stock of the servants, and through their reports, of the whole county; far and near they proclaimed themselves as the relations of Lady 'Hashley.' Fancy what a homecoming they prepared for your poor mother."

"But she was not like them."

"She was very unlike them, but she was their blood relation. Your father cleared his house of every servant who had been there at the time; the fresh establishment were warned to shut the door on any person giving the name of Gibson, but it was too late, the whole county knew the stock from which your mother sprang. They refused to recognise any difference between her and her kindred, her husband's family would not notice her; the neighbours ignored her existence. Nor could they be blamed; they believed Lady Ashley resembled her kindred, and had she done so she would have been the last person desirable to admit to their acquaintance."

"Well, they broke her heart among them," interrupted Alice, in a hard, dry tone. "Why don't you finish the story, Mr. Marston. In spite of a doctor's learned language I know perfectly well my mother died of a broken heart."

"No county neglect would have broken Lady Ashley's heart," resumed the lawyer. "She bore the slights of her neighbours heroically; she lived only for her husband and child; in time she must have won the respect and esteem of the whole place, but——" he stopped abruptly.

"Don't pity me. Go on; I can bear it."

"I have said your father's nature was keenly sensitive. The neglect shown to his wife was as gall to him; his was not a strong character, he could not be happy under public disfavor,

he was rapidly growing a morose and disappointed man."

"And my mother saw it?"

"Yes. She proposed to him to go to London, and in a little gaiety forgot the ill-humours of the Blankshire notables; it was the greatest mistake she did not accompany him. Once presented, royal lips would have passed approval on her beauty, that beauty would have won her the notice of the highest circles, for it she would have been widely courted, and her humble origin forgotten, but she remained at the Park with her child, and my lord came to London."

"And he was unkind to her on his return."

"He never returned."

"Never returned?"

"He was a handsome, attractive man, made for society and its smiles; at this time he was barely forty. For five long years he had been away from London. The renewal of its pleasures was too much for him—too great a contrast to the domestic tranquillity of Ashley. He wrote to your mother saying he must take his place in the world, that he would not drag her into society which would look slightly on her."

"She would be happiest in retirement with her child. He should never love another woman as he did her, but their natures and habits were so different, they would be better apart. He begged her to choose among his country seats the one she preferred, and offered to settle five thousand a year on her until your majority, when fresh arrangements should be made."

"And my mother's answer?"

"She made none. She returned his letter to him without comment. Before he received it, she had left the Park with her daughter and one faithful servant. She took with her all her personal possessions; nothing was left to remind the earl of his wife and child."

"From that day nothing was heard of Lady Ashley until a week ago a letter came to me informing me that she was residing at Ashton under the name of Desmond. She wrote that her health was failing rapidly, and she begged that the provision she had refused for herself might be secured for her daughter."

"I answered the letter promptly, informing Lady Ashley of her husband's death, and that the whole of his property was left by him in trust for his only child."

"By the earl's desire, Miss Desmond, no effort was to be made to find you until you had attained your majority. If you claimed your rights, an establishment was to be formed for you, and five thousand a year allowed for expenses. To his wife Lord Ashley left the personal care of their child; there was a clause in his will saying she would value this more than anything else he had to bestow. He appointed me joint guardian to the estate with Lord Bolton, and in the event of Lady Ashley's death, we were to act also as personal guardians to his heiress."

"Do you mean me, Mr. Marston? Am I Lord Ashley's heiress?"

"Assuredly; your mother sent to me the register of your birth, and that of her own marriage; also the details of her life since she left the Park. You are Lord Ashley's heiress and my ward."

"I, Alice Desmond! It seems impossible."

"It is the simple truth; but the name of Desmond is yours no longer; it can never now be more than your second name. You were christened Alice Desmond, after your mother."

"And now I am Miss Ashley?"

"Now you are the Lady Alice Desmond Morton. It is no new title, you were born so. Your father's death five years ago made you heiress to his estates, but his title could not descend to his daughter; it is now extinct."

"Oh, sir," said Alice sadly, "why could you not have come sooner? You might have saved my mother's life. Ease and affluence might have saved her. Mr. Grant told me so."

"Believe me, Lady Alice, the countess would have accepted nothing for herself. I wish she had been longer spared to guard her daughter."

"To guard me?"

"From the Gibsons chiefly; many of that family are still alive, and though they never tried to find out Miss Desmond, they will spare no pains to introduce themselves to the Lady Alice Morton. I fear much unpleasantness may be in store in that quarter."

"I do not think I am so tender-hearted as my mother was. I can even bear the slights of Blankshire."

"You will have none to bear, I can answer for that. There is a great difference between your case and your mother's. She became a countess only by her marriage; you were born an earl's daughter."

"I don't want society; I am too sad to care to see strangers, Mr. Marston. Before you came I was wondering how I should earn my living. When all is paid here I have just ten pounds in the world."

"Want of money need never trouble you again, my lady. You may find riches the pleasantest for having lived without them."

"We had only a hundred a year, mamma, Martha and I."

"Ah the little annuity her godmother left to Lady Ashley. Lady Alice, I knew and esteemed your mother. I should consider it a favour to pay my last mark of respect to the countess by attending her funeral."

"I shall be glad. I am going, and Martha."

"You! The Lady Alice Morton?"

"Mr. Marston, I don't want to be known here as Lady Alice. I don't want to depart with a flourish of trumpets as the newly-discovered heiress; it might bring me trouble afterwards, indeed it might," very earnestly, thinking of William Gordon, and desiring to prevent anything which might give him a clue to her. "Let me pass away as plain Alice Desmond."

"But the funeral, surely it should be in accordance with the rank of the countess?"

"I think not; she never cared for show. Let us leave her here in the quiet she loved; but at Ashley let there be a marble tablet to her memory, just to show people I loved her, however they despised her."

"I will attend to your ladyship's wishes. It is what Lord Bolton himself suggested."

"Who is Lord Bolton?"

"I thought to have told you, Lady Alice, my co-trustee and guardian under the late earl's will."

"Did he know my mother?"

"I think not. Lord Bolton was but a younger son at the time of the earl's marriage. He was attached to some embassy, and only returned to England ten years ago."

"Ah."

"He is not the less kindly disposed towards you, Lady Alice. It is his wish that you should make his house your home until your majority. He desired me to tell you his daughters would welcome you as a sister, and their mother do her best to supply the place of your own."

"But I don't know the Boltons, I don't want any sisters, and no one could be like mamma. I'd much rather live alone somewhere with Martha."

"That is impossible, my lady. You must have a home worthy of your rank, and when you have recovered from your loss enter society under the auspices of some lady of fashion."

"But why should Lord Bolton keep me? It is rather hard on him just because he is my guardian."

"He will receive a liberal allowance from the estate, my lady. You need fear incurring no obligation."

"You will leave me Martha, won't you? She is all I have now."

"I am sure Lady Bolton will receive your maid. The family are at their country seat in Sussex now, and I have directions to escort you to London as soon as possible after the approaching mournful ceremony."

"The next day, please, Mr. Marston. But why to London?"

"Lord Bolton will meet us there, my lady."

He did not add that the nobleman and his wife had many misgivings as to the manners and appearance of their ward, and that they had

deemed it necessary one of them should inspect her before she were admitted as an inmate of Bolton Castle.

"Let us go to the next day, Mr. Marston."

Lady Alice Morton's strongest wish was to leave Ashton quickly enough to escape all discovery from William Gordon.

To do her justice it was not her unlooked for prosperity which prompted this. She knew now she had never loved the man; for her mother's sake alone she had promised to marry him, and she felt no scruple now at breaking her word; the very form of her acceptance must have told the artist she did not love him.

When Alice knew she had lost her mother a feeling of aversion arose towards the man who had to apted her from that mother's side; but for William Gordon Mrs. Desmond would not have died alone.

Alice shrank from the very idea of marrying him, yet she was perfectly aware she had promised to do so; that promise she would never tell to anyone.

Never to anyone would she reveal that episode in her life, yet, in spite of her seeming security, she fancied she had not heard the last of it. Young as she was she knew the artist loved her intensely, for she remembered his passionate kisses and fervent words of love.

She could hardly believe that absence would induce him to forget her, although she hoped a new name would prevent his finding her and forcing her to redeem her troth.

CHAPTER V.

AT BOLTON CASTLE.

The sky was blue as the summer sea,
The depths were cloudless overhead;
The air was calm as it could be—
There was no sight or sound of dread.

CHARLES LORD BOLTON and the late Earl of Ashley had been friends and companions when the former's chance of possessing a title was very small indeed.

They were inseparable at school, and intimate at college; they entered society together, the one as Viscount Morton, heir apparent to the earldom of Ashley, the other as plain Mr. Bolton.

A younger son with only five hundred pounds to portion him out in the world, this detrimental had the imprudence—on the principle that what was not enough for one must be sufficient for two—to marry a penniless young lady of blue blood; the relatives on either side were properly horrified.

Mrs. Bolton's father gave her a hundred pounds; Charles' brother got him appointed attaché to an embassy, starting for the East and for many a long day, the young couple were entirely forgotten by their friends in England.

For seventeen years Charles Bolton lived abroad, and his relatives and country really seemed to get on very well without him; the former did not even think it worth while to write and console with him when the news of his wife's death reached them, though they one and all found time to remonstrate by letter with him when he took a second helpmate, for the young attaché had been so happy in his first marriage that he speedily contracted another equally imprudent, and this was the last news of him which reached England, until the papers chronicled how, through a series of unexpected deaths, the Honourable Charles Bolton had succeeded to the family title and estates, and become Lord Bolton, of Bolton.

The new lord was far from desirous of returning to his native land.

"We shall be nobody there," he remarked to his wife. "How on earth can we keep up Bolton Castle and a town house on two thousand a year. Of course my brother has left every penny he can away from us. I vote we stay here and let the title take care of itself."

But Lady Bolton thought otherwise. She cared little for her own sake to return to England, but she was ambitious for her children.

Her step-son Edwin would have only the two thousand a year his father declared so inadequate to support the title, and for her own two girls there was literally no provision; their destiny was matrimony, and to achieve this destiny they must see society, and good society.

Something of this she put before her husband, and he yielded to her. His appointment was resigned, and he and his family returned in the first ship to England.

It is very probable that they were far less happy as Boltons of Bolton than they had been in their distant eastern home, but certainly Lady Bolton never confessed their return had been a mistake.

She was a good wife and a true mother. Her management made the two thousand a year go as far as possible, but for people in their rank the family certainly were poor.

Lord Bolton made his bow to the Prince of Wales at the first levee after his return, and his wife was duly presented to the Queen, but beyond these ceremonies they took little part in the world of fashion, and lived almost entirely at their country seat, avowedly for the sake of their children, in reality to economise.

Lord Ashley was prompt to renew the friendship of his youth; he was a frequent visitor at Bolton Castle; changed indeed were he and his host since their last meeting.

Charles Lord Bolton, though happy in his wife and children, had suffered too much from genteel poverty ever to become again the gay, careless man of fashion he had once been. Cold and proud, his manner to strangers was almost repelling, and his once genial temper had been soured, so that only to those who knew him well did he show the great qualities he really possessed. The change in his friend was greater still.

All Lord Ashley's story was over; he had forsaken his wife for the world, and now the world palled on him.

Never once did he speak of his marriage to his friend, but he said to him when he lay on his death-bed:

"Charley, for the sake of old times, take care of my little girl."

And Charley, little knowing to what he pledged himself, replied:

"Yes."

In the month of July then, the family were, as Mr. Marston had told his ward, at Bolton Castle. Captain Bolton, the son and heir, a fine young man of twenty-six, and his step-sisters, Fanny and Margaret, pretty, warm-hearted girls of eighteen and twenty, their mother a handsome woman still, despite her fifty years and a kindly one too.

She sat with her daughters in the pleasant morning room talking of some expected guests, and the arrangements for their entertainment, when Captain Bolton entered.

He had been a mere child at the time of his father's second marriage, and he looked on Lady Bolton as his own mother.

"I thought you were going to drive to Elcheater with your father, Edwin?" began my lady, surprised at his appearance.

"The fates prevented," returned the young officer, settling himself in an easy chair; "the dog-cart was at the door when a remarkably shabby fly drove up from which stepped an elderly gentleman, who declared he must see Lord Bolton on particular business; my father's closetted with him now."

"Who was it, Edwin?"

"I don't know, mother; a lawyer he looked like. I forget the name—Marsham or something of the kind."

"Was it Marston?"

"Well, I really believe it was. Don't look so serious, mother, there can't be anything wrong; the old gentleman looked as bland as possible."

"My lord will be glad to see you in the library, my lady?"

The interruption came from a footman. Lady Bolton rose at once, and followed the man downstairs. Edwin turned to his sisters.

"Now aren't you both on the tip top of curiosity and expectation?"

"Not a bit worse than you are, dear Edwin."

"I curious! Why I never feel interest enough in anything to be curious about it!"

His fingers played idly with the silk fringe of the table cloth.

He had spoken the truth. His great fault was a want of energy, due, perhaps, to the hot climate in which his youth had been spent.

Honourable, truthful, and in cases of danger, brave as a lion, there was no doubt that in everyday life Captain Edwin Bolton was a very exasperating individual.

His professional duties were strictly performed, but beyond them he was indolent to a degree. He had good abilities, but rarely cared to use them.

He seemed to take things with an utter listless indifference, which, though it might be philosophical, was certainly not pleasing, yet he was a favourite in society.

He pronounced dancing a bore, but when he chose, he could obtain the belle of a ball for his partner; in the last season it was whispered more than one beautiful girl with money—but that is understood; the world usually denies the beauty of portionless damsels—would have said "yes" to any question he had pleased to ask her, but he asked none, it was too much trouble.

"Edwin, do you ever mean to marry?" his stepmother had asked one day in sheer despair, when the possessor of thirty thousand pounds, who had shown herself very gracious to Edwin, had transferred her smiles to another in disgust at his indifference.

"Some day," returned the captain, equably.

"Where will you find anyone more eligible than Miss Johnson? she would have accepted you directly."

"Yes," answered Edwin, complacently, "but she was a great deal too fond of talking; she had a frightful amount of energy, that girl; why she made me play croquet once, with the thermometer at ninety-six in the shade."

"You are perfectly absurd, Edwin," declared Lady Bolton, getting rather angry. "What do you expect you will become?"

"Older every day I live."

His stepmother laughed in spite of herself.

"Edwin, your marriage really is almost a necessity. I don't speak for my sake, but your own. I can't think how you manage on your pay and small allowance, yet your father cannot possibly spare you any more."

"Of course he can't, I don't wish him to. I manage very well."

"One would think you were perfectly indifferent to money."

"I don't care for the trouble of getting it."

Lady Bolton shrugged her shoulders in dismay. Edwin went up to her and kissed her affectionately; a more fascinating being than this scapegrace when he chose it would be hard to find.

"Look here, mother, I'm afraid I haven't got the energy requisite to pull in double harness; if you must go match-making—and I know all women love it—why please devote your attention to the girls first."

So Captain Edwin Bolton was perfectly disengaged and fancy free at the moment he sat chatting with his sisters, and when Fanny informed him with a smile that the Honourable Clara Burleigh was coming the next day, he was perfectly aware that for his sake she had been invited.

"It's no use, Fan," he answered, with a gleam of amusement in his dark eyes. "Oh, how hot it is."

"Soldiers ought not to feel the heat. Why didn't you go to Elcheater, Edwin?"

"I didn't know how long the governor would be; besides, I was only going to keep him company. My lady is a long time."

"I do wonder what they can be talking about?" put in Margaret. "What could the lawyer want mamma, too, for?"

"Ah, Meg, you've your own share of curiosity and mine too, I fancy. Besides, how do you know it is a lawyer?"

"You said so."

"Indeed I did not."

"Well, I wish they would make haste, we had so many little matters to settle with mamma about to-morrow."

"I wish to-morrow would never come."

"Oh, Edwin!" aghast.

"Well, you'd say just the same, Fanny, if you had all the men to entertain. My father just devotes himself to an old friend or two, and leaves me all the hard work."

"He knows you like to make yourself useful."

"But I hate being useful."

"I hope you will not hate it for once," said Lady Bolton, pleasantly. She had entered in time to hear the last words, and now addressed herself to Edwin: "Your father wished me to ask you to drive Mr. Marston to Elcheater."

"Mother, that's too bad. I offered to drive my father out of sheer compassion, because he bemoaned his solitude. I didn't think to be turned into a sort of amateur coachman at once. Where's Mr. Marston's fly?"

"It was sent away; besides, from your description, I should imagine it would never reach Elcheater in time for the twelve o'clock express."

"I suppose I must be a martyr; but, mother, it mustn't be made a precedent of, remember I can't always drive whoever wants to catch a train."

"I would not ask you," returned Lady Bolton, mildly, "but Roberts will be wanted to drive your father to meet Mr. Grey."

"Mr. Grey. I thought he came to-morrow."

"To-day."

"Well, I'm at Mr. Marston's service. I hope he won't expect me to talk much."

"Indeed I should not think he would feel inclined; he came down from London expressly to see your father, and his great anxiety is to get back as soon as possible."

"I'm off. Good-bye. Oh, mother, Meg will certainly expire if you don't tell her the subject of Mr. Marston's visit. She has been boring me with heaps of questions already."

"Oh, Edwin."

"Never mind, Meg, I'll make him confide it all to me going along, and you shall have the benefit of it second-hand on my return."

(To be Continued.)

FARMERS FOR HUSBANDS.

ONE benefit derived from the improvement in agricultural implements is that farmers have now become much more desirable as husbands than they formerly were. A man who had literally to drudge, to work hard the livelong day, and every day, with his hands, found little time for the cultivation of his mind and manners, or for indulgence in the pleasures and refinements of social life.

Now a farmer rides to do most of his work. If he is a man of natural taste he drives fine horses and has a good time while he is cultivating his growing crops.

His wife is no longer the slave to toil she used to be.

She enjoys facilities for intellectual culture, and for visiting, and, in turn, entertaining her friends.

The mower, the reaper, the horse power—woman has much to thank them for. They have made farmers, as a class, more desirable husbands.

GOLD DIGGINGS IN RUSSIA.—The Russian newspapers state that good results were obtained last year in the gold-diggings near the sources of the rivers Amovi and Sel. There are at present above 3,000 persons engaged in those diggings, and the yield obtained in 1877 amounts to 173lbs., representing a value of 2,075,140 roubles. There are other gold diggings besides in Siberia, belonging to private proprietors, some of which are very remunerative. One of these has yielded in the past year an output worth no less than 3,500,000 roubles.



[GEORGE CRABTREE'S WORK.]

BOUND TO THE TRAWL.

By the Author of "Clytie Cranbourne," "The Golden Bowl," "Poor Loo," etc.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

"THIEVES! THIEVES!"

Men as resolute appear
With too much as too little fear. BUTLER.

The dinner-party at the Willows was not a success.

Sunday evening parties rarely are. There are so many things that one can't do, so few that one can, that the company itself must be exceptional if the evening passes over without everybody feeling more or less bored or bad tempered.

Amy Garland upon this occasion was decidedly a victim to the latter complaint, for when she saw Katie Jessop arrive with Colonel Chartres on one side and Percy Rossburn on the other, she felt as though she could very willingly have torn that young woman's eyes out.

This not being quite practicable, she showed her high displeasure by treating the girl with slighting contempt, and snapping out disagreeable replies to the young barrister and her uncle whenever they addressed a remark to her.

Not that she gained much by this conduct, for Minnie and George, partly to atone for their sister's conduct, but principally for her own sake, devoted themselves pretty exclusively to the fisherman's niece, while a doctor who was the only other guest talked to Mrs. Garland, and the soldier and barrister, never weary of each other's society, conversed together comfortably enough, so that Amy, though the eldest daughter, found herself neglected and her bad temper treated as of no account.

"I wish George would not make such an idiot of himself," she whispered, later in the evening to Minnie; "that girl seems to have bewitched you all."

"And you more than any," retorted her sister. "If you are jealous on account of Percy you needn't show it in such an unmaidenly manner."

"I! What do you mean? How dare you talk to me in this way?"

Silence and a shrug of the shoulders was the only reply to this speech.

"I hate her," exclaimed Amy, a minute later.

"Yes, you make that pretty palpable; you also in your words and manner suggest a reason for it; in the case of anyone else you would see how unwise, to say the least of it, such conduct is, but it is useless to talk to you I know."

Here she was wrong, however; her sister from that moment became more amiable, and later in the evening she even condescended to volunteer to accompany Katie if she would sing an air from the Messiah.

Whether amiability or spite prompted her to this it is impossible to say, for though Katie's voice was exceptionally good, and she had received some sort of a musical education, she was certainly not equal to singing a difficult piece before a roomful of comparative strangers and severe critics.

Amy was persistent, however.

"I have heard you sing it," she said, positively, till the girl found that without seeming to be disagreeable there was no escape for her.

She did not fail, her voice was too pure and sweet and powerful for that, but the singing was not a success, partly too through Amy's imperfect accompaniment, but Colonel Chartres, coming up to the side of his protégée, said, in a low tone:

"I must see that you and Minnie get lessons in singing from a first-rate master; you have both of you good voices, but they want cultivation."

And this was in fact what Amy's jealousy had

brought matters to; Minnie and Katie were to have lessons; they were taken to theatres, concerts, and places of amusement, and any trifling present that was bought for one the other was sure to have a duplicate of.

"I wonder uncle doesn't adopt or marry her," the elder girl had one day spitefully observed, and then she learnt something that did not make her love Katie any better, but taught her that a little discretion in her observations would be desirable.

George Garland in this respect at any rate was very unlike his elder sister, and he very considerably vexed Percy Rossburn not only by his attentions to Katie, but by making him the confidant of his hopes, fears and intentions.

"You are not looking after her for yourself I hope, old boy?" he began.

And on Percy assuring him he had no intentions in that quarter, the handsome, loose-jointed young fellow went on:

"I'm glad of that; I shouldn't like you and me to be pulling against each other. She's a lovely girl, isn't she? Did you ever see such eyes or such features? And her lips, I'd give ten years of my life to kiss them."

"You might manage it at a lower rate than that, I should think," half sneered his companion.

"I don't know, she isn't a girl a fellow could take liberties with; she carries herself like a duchess. By my grandfather, how her eyes flashed when I put my arm round her waist one day. I didn't try for a kiss after it, I can tell you."

"Or since, I suppose?"

"Well, at any rate I haven't got one. I suppose she expects me to propose first. Though it doesn't look promising on the face of it, I don't think it would be a bad match for me; you and she I hear are to get most of the governor's tin."

"Whoever told you such rubbish?"

"I had it on very good authority; but, I say, if she asks your advice you will say a good word

for me, won't you? She thinks an awful lot of your opinion, and as you don't want her yourself, you might help a chum."

"I'd rather have nothing to say in the matter. I think you are both of you too young to marry. Besides you have no profession; what could you live upon?"

"I'm reading for the Bar to be sure; haven't I eaten my first term, then I've a hundred a year of my own. I shall have more when the mother goes to Heaven, and I have gone in for literature too, lately; what Katie and I could both make with our pens would help us pretty considerably."

"Bah! bah! Go and hang yourself, my dear fellow; do anything before getting into such a hole as that, and dragging a nice girl with you. No, I'll have nothing to do with it except to prevent you from making such an idiot of yourself, if I can."

"For my sake, or for the girl's?" questioned George, coolly.

"For both," was the heated reply.

"I'll tell you what it is, Rossburn, I don't believe in you about that girl," said George Garland, suspiciously. "You say you don't care for her, and you don't mean to marry her, and yet your face changes, and your eyes brighten when she enters the room, and you make her think there's no other man like you; it isn't fair you know either to the girl or to any other fellow who wants her. It's worse than a dog in a manger; you're injuring the hay as well as keeping the ox—that's me—from eating it."

"Rubbish; I haven't seen the girl half-a-dozen times in my life; your assertion is ridiculously absurd."

Then, Percy Rossburn in no very good temper walked away, and as a means of showing his utter indifference to Katie, walked out to her new home the following Sunday to ask her to take a walk with him.

George, however, knew nothing of this; he thought they had accidentally met near the Willows, and he was besides inclined to believe that Percy was not in love with Katie, gauging his friend's character also pretty accurately, when he judged that ambition would be a more powerful agent in shaping his destiny than love.

Indeed there was the difficulty; had Katie been his superior, or even his equal in position, the young barrister would without doubt have asked her to marry him, but a fisherman's niece, brought through odd circumstances into contact with people who only just tolerated her because of the whim of a rich old man, the idea was preposterous, and he could have knocked his head against a wall to think he had ever even meditated upon it.

Thus matters stood this night, and Katie, so pleased and happy, little thought of the pain and misery gathering up for her.

The girl was to stay at the Willows that night, so was the barrister, but the doctor, living in the neighbourhood, needed no "putting up," but took his departure soon after ten.

It was a hot, sultry night, being the beginning of August, the Garlands were talking of going away to the seaside soon, and everyone on this day had complained of the heat.

Katie occupied the same room as that in which she had slept when she first came to the Willows. Its windows looked out upon the river.

Had she been living in town, or had her room been on the ground floor, she might have thought it unsafe to leave the windows open, but here no thought of danger entered her mind, and she knew that Minnie, whose room was on the same level, always threw the sash wide open in hot weather.

There was no moon to-night, but the stars shone brightly, and a cool breeze swept up from the river, as the girl, having extinguished the light, threw up the blinds, and opened the windows so that all the air possible might reach her.

Then she went to bed and slept.

How long she did not know, but she was aroused by the sound of voices, for someone was

climbing up the wisteria which covered that part of the house.

Could she close the window before the climber reached it.

She started up in bed at the thought, but it was hopeless, there were two windows, and what could she, a helpless girl, do if the robbers set upon her?

Not naturally a coward, she tried to throw off the terror that held her spellbound and rise and give the alarm before the burglars could effect an entrance; but her limbs refused to obey her, her tongue seemed tied, she could not even reach out her hand for the bell-rope, when a spike outside the window sill reached her.

At a given point fear becomes desperation; that voice Katie knew but too well, it was the voice of the young man who more than three years ago had tried to kiss and would, but for Basil's interference, have destroyed her—the voice of George Crabtree, whom she fully believed to be his murderer.

No time to lose now.

Another second or two and he would be in the room, and what mercy might she expect at his hands then?

Quick as thought she slipped out of bed, unlocked the door and got out of the room, closing it behind her.

Then she rushed to Colonel Chartres' door, knocked upon it loudly, shook the handle and called:

"Thieves! thieves!"

She did the same to the doors of the other two men, then remembering Minnie was in almost as much danger as she herself had been, she rushed into her room, shook her, begged her not to be frightened and dragged her still more asleep than awake into the passage.

Here Colonel Chartres, with but the scantiest of clothing on, was standing at his door, candle in hand, demanding the meaning of this disturbance.

At sight of him Katie remembered that she herself wore but a night-gown, while Minnie was in no better plight; but this was no time to think of appearances, and she said with conviction as well as terror:

"There are robbers getting into my room, and one of them I am sure is George Crabtree."

"George Crabtree!" repeated the colonel, wondering where he had heard the name.

"Yes, the man we believe killed Basil."

"Ah! what makes you think so?"

"I heard his voice; hark, they are getting in at the window; do call the other men to help you. I have knocked at their doors. Thank Heaven, here they are."

With an expression of relief as Percy and George, with but few garments and no boots on, made their appearance.

In a second the condition of affairs was explained to them, sounds were heard from the room Katie had left but a minute or two before, the colonel got his pistols, the young men armed themselves with sticks which they found in his room, the two trembling girls were told to remain there, and the candle being covered over, they were left almost in darkness while the soldier and his two nephews took up their station at the door of the room from whence men's voices could be heard.

The robbers had just discovered that the bed, which was still warm from being slept in, was vacant.

"We'd best scuttle," said a voice in a low, growling tone, "the alarm's being raised; 'twas the noise you made in scrambling up that did it."

"Boah, it's only a woman, and there's only an old man and a milkop living in the house."

"Why, what is this?"

And he took a letter from the dressing-table, upon which was written:

"Katie Jessop."

No reply was given him, for at that moment the door was thrown open, and there was a rush of men into the room.

The lamp was dashed from the burglar's hand by one of his companions.

There was a flash of fire, a hand to hand struggle, an attempt to get out of the window and escape, then a falling down, down, a heavy thud on the shrubs beneath, and George Crabtree knows no more. The boat from which he and his companions had landed hastily slipped down the river in the dim darkness without him.

CHAPTER XXIX.

"SURELY I HAVEN'T GOT MYSELF INTO ANOTHER DIFFICULTY."

"It's good to be merry and wise—
The road to be honest and true;
The best to be off with the old lore
Before you are on with the new."

"Here is one of them," said Percy Rossburn, as he, with the other men, were examining the garden below Katie's window; "what a hang-dog thing it is," he added, giving George Crabtree a push with his foot; "had a fall, I suppose, in his hurry to get away. Just go to the front door, Garland, and see if you can find a policeman. This fellow mustn't escape as the rest have done."

"Yes, go, George," said the colonel; then he added to Percy, "I should like Katie to look at the fellow's face, and see if she can recognise it."

"Recognise it! How should she?" exclaimed the barrister, indignantly.

In a low tone the reason wherefore was given him, and at that moment the burglar moved his lips and muttered, as though in his sleep:

"Katie Jessop."

"There, did you hear that?" said the colonel, eagerly; "she must see him, before the policeman arrives too; keep guard over him while I fetch her," and Colonel Chartres hurried off to bring down the trembling and only half clad girl.

Percy Rossburn would have protested, but he knew it was useless; he was greatly annoyed nevertheless.

"What was Katie to be dragged into the matter for? Why must she be brought to look upon this repulsive creature?"

He gave the miscreant a slight kick with his foot to ascertain if he were conscious, but the fellow uttered no sound, and then, satisfied that he was still insensible, the barrister turned away and walked down the garden towards the river.

When Katie, with Colonel Chartres and George Garland, accompanied by a policeman, arrived upon the scene the burglar was gone.

"What can have become of him? Percy was here to guard him!" exclaimed the soldier, anxiously.

But his question was soon answered; only a few steps off Percy was discovered, lying face downward upon the grass, perfectly unconscious if not dead.

Then it was that Katie's secret became known, for she flung herself down by his side entreating him to look at, to speak to her, utterly forgetful of everything but the terrible idea that he was dying.

For a few seconds everyone, except the policeman, was bewildered.

The colonel was surprised and shocked; George Garland felt savage; and it was only Minnie's appearance upon the scene that roused them all to action.

Ashamed of her exhibition of feeling, Katie rose to her feet and clung to Minnie as though seeking protection and help from her friendship, while the others lifted the prostrate man, and carried him into the house.

By this time Mrs. Garland, Amy and the servants were aroused, a doctor was sent for, and the policeman having procured assistance, made a minute search of the house and grounds.

Very little could be discovered, however. In their attempt to rob, the burglars had been unsuccessful, but they had all got off safely, the last one, after his attack upon the barrister, having in all probability dropped into the river

and swam across, or to some little distance from the house up or down stream.

At any rate he was safely out of their reach, poor Percy Rosburn being the only one who had sustained any damage.

It was some time before the young fellow opened his eyes, and when he did so he could throw no light upon the condition in which he had been found except that he had walked away from the burglar believing him to be insensible, and that he was conscious of nothing after except a stunning sensation, probably a blow at the back of the head.

"And he has had the narrowest escape of losing his reason," said the doctor to Colonel Chatterbox; "he must be kept very quiet, and there must be nothing like excitement for some days. Of course he will remain here?"

"Of course, he is my nephew."

Then the doctor went away, and the awakened sleepers were sent back to their beds, for it was still too early to think of dressing, all except the colonel, who declared his intention of nursing his relative himself.

Poor Katie; the excitement over she shook and trembled like a leaf agitated by a boisterous gale.

What had she said and done? Had Percy heard her? She hoped not.

The others she cared less about, and yet, she had been surprised and frightened herself at her emotion when she thought he was dead.

She knew that she liked him, but to love him thus, to feel that the happiness of her life was bound up in him, and to be conscious all the time that Mrs. Garland would look upon her with cold contempt, and Amy, with malice and hatred, while even the dear old colonel would be sad and grave and disappointed to find the poor girl to whom he had lent a helping hand so weak and so forgetful of her origin as to give her love unsought to a man so infinitely her superior in all the gifts that the world appreciates.

"And yet I am not naturally weak or selfish or mean," she thought, as she stood before the long glass, and pushed her abundant dark hair away from her face.

"Percy Rosburn can never be anything to me," she went on, looking at her own fair reflection. "He is as proud and ambitious as Lucifer himself, and I am not wanting in the same qualities myself, though they run in a different groove and direction."

"Amy Garland loves him after a fashion; she is his equal, I am not; I have no business here; I have to work my way through life, and I grasp the first rose that I see on the hedges, and then cry if the thorn prick me and tear my flesh, and yet I talk of endurance and fortitude."

"I am a poor, miserable wretch; but he will recover, the doctor says so, and I will keep out of his way and avoid him for the future. It will be hard, particularly so in the life I have chosen. But it must, and it shall be."

Then she began to dress, for going to bed and sleeping was out of the question in her disturbed and excited frame of mind; the morn too was breaking, and the first rosy beams of the August sun were flushing the eastern horizon.

Daylight makes one matter of fact; a cold bath is also a good awakener to the realities of life, and by the time the breakfast gong sounded, Katie had not only written some half dozen folios of a story upon which she was engaged, and that was shortly to appear in a magazine, but seemed about one of the last young women in the world to—as she disdainfully termed it—"make an idiot of herself."

"How is Mr. Rosburn?" she asked of the colonel when he came into the breakfast-room.

"Better, I think; he is sleeping."

"I am glad of that," then, as though she had no further interest in him, she remarked: "The police have not caught any of those men, I suppose?"

"Not yet."

"Then I fear they won't. I can't describe the terror I felt when I heard that man's voice."

"But you might have been mistaken," urged George Garland.

"No; I never forget a voice," she replied; then the thought suddenly came into her mind. "Does he know that I am here? Was it to find me that he and his fellow robbers came?"

The idea had not occurred to her before. Now it terribly alarmed her, for if this were the case her life was very probably in danger.

After breakfast she managed to hint this to the colonel, but he pooh-poohed the idea at once.

"It was plunder, not you, my dear, that the man wanted," he said, smilingly; "but when shall I see you again? At what time are you going home?"

"I am going at once, perhaps you will write to or call on me during the week. I shall be glad to hear how Mr. Rosburn is progressing towards recovery," she went on, with an effort.

"Oh, he will be all right, except that his professional work will suffer. You are not afraid to go home alone this morning?"

"Afraid! Oh, no. The walk will do me good."

Before leaving, however, Katie received a message from Mrs. Garland expressing her appreciation of her courage in raising the alarm, and thus saving them all from injury and violence.

"Mamma is under the impression that we should all have been murdered in our beds," smiled Amy, who was the bearer of the thanks, "and indeed it was plucky of you," she added.

"I don't think so; you would have done just the same," was the reply; "but it is a pity Mr. Rosburn was not more cautious."

"Yes, it was, but he will soon be well again; uncle and I will nurse him."

"Yes," said Katie, vaguely.

It was evident that Amy had not heard of her excitement and foolish words over the insensible form of the barrister, otherwise she would not have been so gracious.

But then, Amy would nurse him, would arrange his pillows, lift the cooling drink to his parched lips, would talk to and amuse him, and show him how sweet and tender and womanly she could be; would even imply by her very care and gentleness how dear he was to her, while she, poor Katie, would be shut up in her two little rooms, thinking of him, yet unable to take one step or utter one word to narrow the distance between them.

One of the penalties of her sex, but not the less hard on that account; not that she was likely to sit down and weep under it, on the contrary, she shook hands cheerfully and went away, resisting carelessly, it seemed, Minnie's question whether she wouldn't like to see Percy before she left.

"Oh, no; tell him I hope he will soon be better. Good-bye," smiling, and she was gone.

"It was only excitement on her part, and fear that he was killed; I might have done the same thing myself," Minnie observed to her brother and uncle, referring to Katie's outburst of emotion.

"Yes, I quite agree with you," assented her brother, and a few seconds later he left the house.

Walking on, thinking sadly of life and the pains and penalties thereof, Katie Jessop was conscious that a man was hurrying after her, but she did not turn to look at him, even though she quickened her pace, nor was she afraid, for being on the high road she could scarcely dread danger.

"Katie!" she started, then said:

"Mr. Garland! What is the matter?"

"Nothing, except that I wished for the pleasure of escorting you home."

"And you have only just discovered it," a trifle bitterly. "I suppose you were afraid of

being scolded if you expressed the wish before your friends."

"Pon my honour you're mistaken. I should have seen you home as I had a right to do as my mother's guest, but for remembering how you went on when Percy was found stunned."

"How did I go on?" though indeed but too bitterly she knew.

"Well, you said all kinds of things, but I suppose you were frightened and excited."

"Of course I was, so would you have been in my case. I heard the voice of a man who I believe once wanted to kill me, and of whom I suspect terrible things, just outside my open window, climbing to get into the room." Then there was the difficulty of waking you all; the fright and horror of seeing Mr. Rosburn, dead as I supposed; 'twould be no wonder if I talked any amount of rubbish."

"Yes, that's what Minnie said; girls are so excitable. Now, I should never think of calling a woman 'my love' or 'my darling,' because she seemed to be dead."

"But did I do so? Do you think he heard me?"

"No, he didn't hear anything, but I'm glad you didn't mean it, Katie, for I'm awfully fond of you."

"Rubbish; you're only a boy."

"Where will you get your men from? I'm three or four years older than you at any rate."

"But you are such an idler; you have no profession or purpose or aim in life."

"Well, if I go in heartily for the profession I have chosen will you marry me, Katie?"

"I shouldn't think of making any promise of the kind; but of one thing you may be quite certain, I will never marry an idler."

"Then I shall work and succeed for your sake, and I shall consider that you belong to me."

"You must consider nothing of the kind, for I make you no promise."

"I shall; and take this kiss on the strength of it."

"George, how dare you. People will see you too."

"I don't care; a man may kiss his own wife, I suppose."

"I am not your wife, and I am very angry with you."

"Nonsense, Katie, you might just give me one to seal the bargain."

"I should never think of such a thing, and there is no bargain; now do go away, I don't want you."

"Of course you don't; catch a woman admitting that she does want a man; but I shall see you safely to your own door, that miscreant may be about again."

A suggestion which silenced the girl's objections, but when they parted at her door she emphatically repeated that there was no bargain or engagement between them, and that he was never to come to see her unless he brought his sister Minnie with him.

At which he laughed with the confidence of one sure of success, and lifting his hat, turned his steps towards the railway station.

"Surely I have not got myself into another difficulty," thought the girl, as slowly pulling off her gloves she watched his tall figure growing smaller in the distance; "that would be terrible."

Then she took off her walking apparel and tried to concentrate her mind upon her work.

(To be Continued.)

THE MYSTERIOUS POWER OF POISON.

THE subtle influence of poison is frequently felt at this season of the year, when we may be very seriously affected by merely walking among the poison ivy, or, indeed, from going in the vicinity of it without touching it at all. Sometimes from this cause a person's head will become swollen to an enormous and almost

incredible size; the eyes will be completely closed, and the whole system prostrated for days. These are extreme cases, but by no means uncommon.

What is known as poisoned dogwood will produce similar effects, just from burning it in an open fireplace in a room where persons sit.

The air in these instances must be impregnated with the poison; and it shows what powerful influences may be floating, unperceived, at any time, in the atmosphere we inhale.

What is most curious about these plants, which are so poisonous to some that merely going past them will be attended by such injurious consequences, is that others may handle them, and chew and even swallow the leaves with impunity. There are many mysteries to be unravelled yet.

HER GUIDING STAR;

OR,

LOVE AND TREACHERY.

CHAPTER XXIV.

RACHEL did not confirm, though she could not deny, her aunt's assertion.

"My child," continued Sarah, earnestly, "spread her letter, like Rabshakeh's 'before the Lord,' and verily thou shalt be heard. Be not disheartened; thou knowest, 'No cross, no crown.'"

"I will do as my father shall advise," replied Rachel, hearing his approaching footstep; and, as he entered, she put the note into his hand, saying, "I wish to do in this matter, father, as seemeth best unto thee."

Now John Austin was too busy with his farm, and the cares, large and small, of his industrious life, to have time for close in-door observation.

It had probably never crossed his mind to question what the visits of Henry might tend to, continued, as they had been, from his childhood.

"He was," he thought, "a sensible lad, and a good one; and, moreover, his laughter was pleasant to the hearer;" for, from under the restraint of Quaker manners, there often wells forth a sprig of mirth that mingles readily with its like.

Nor was his scrutiny quickened by the religious zeal of his sister.

He was well aware that as yet Rachel's conformity consisted only in "dress and address."

He could wish it otherwise, but this "was not for him to bring to pass."

Had he feared that she was in danger of violating her own convictions, he would have been much disturbed.

But habits, the result of education merely, must, he knew, be liable to change; and he held that she could yet be a Christian woman, even though her speech and apparel were altered.

Having read the note, he replied:

"I marvel what thee means? Friend Fannuir and his daughter have never failed to us; and, if they desire this small favour at thy hands, I should be loth to deny them. Go, therefore, of a certainty."

Sarah, by look rather than word, expressed a demurrer, which John perceiving said, "That is if thy aunt can spare thee. I would not have her cumbered by too much serving, yet, rather than thee should say nay in this matter, I advise thee to seek someone to assist her in thy stead."

Sarah knew her brother well enough to understand that, once having decided, he was little likely to change his opinion; and, as in such a case words would be useless, she, with her usual dislike to superfluous expenditure, spared them,

and Rachel dismissed the servant with the desired answer.

The next day, as Jessie was alone in the parlour, absorbed in a book, the door opened, but so noiselessly that she was not aware of the entrance of anyone till a near step drew her attention; and, turning, she found herself confronted by a young girl whom she had never before seen.

She was apparently not much older than herself, lower in stature, but of such fair proportions, and so erect a carriage, that height was not necessary to confer dignity. Nor had her natural flexibility of limb and movement been repressed by the primness of her dress. This was a gown of grey material with the long, tight Quaker waste, unrelieved by any garniture; a muslin handkerchief crossed over her breast, sleeves tight to below the elbow, and there met by long grey kid mitts. Her gown was just short enough to show that she wore the low "spring-heels," not in order to affect height, but for greater neatness.

She had a shawl of the same colour, and a bonnet of the Quaker fashion; but from under it looked out a pair of eyes in strange contrast with this sad-coloured attire.

They were of that form and colour described as "Italian," soft as the dove's, but in their rich depths a fire burned.

Her brow was strongly marked, and, in keeping with her mouth, gave more of character and firmness to her face than beauty. But a clear and smooth complexion—the usual accompaniment of her dark auburn hair—atoned for any irregularities; rendering the whole, though not faultless, at once striking and pleasing—a face which, if it could not defy criticism, was sure of admiration.

Jessie was not long in doubt as to who she was.

"Well," thought she, "if Cousin Harry could afford to be silent about her external charms, she must have a great deal besides."

"Miss Austin, is it not?" said she, offering her hand.

"Not so," replied the young girl; "Rachel Austin better pleaseth me. And thou art—" "Jessie Farleigh."

"So I did suppose."

Having placed a chair for her, Jessie assisted in removing her hat, and saw, admiringly, the little white cypress gauze cap that shaded, but could not conceal her rich hair.

After commonplaces exchanged about weather, walking, etc., both were silent. Jessie thought she perceived the impress of Miss Fannuir in the refinement of her voice and manner, and in the accuracy of her speech; but, fearing to embarrass, restrained her desire to look at her; while Rachel fixed her eyes on Jessie, not with the gaze of ill-bred curiosity, but a sad intentness that betrayed a more than common interest.

To a person curious in the effect of modes of thought on manners, they might have been a profitable study.

The one, unspoiled by the world, but not ignorant of its prescriptions—neither selfish nor arrogant, yet not indifferent to her advantages of wealth and position—was constrained, from the fear of doing either too little or too much. The other, undisturbed by a question for her already settled, not by propriety or expediency, but on grounds far higher, was calm and self-possessed.

Taught to honour no man for external distinctions, she was unmoved in their presence, and was absorbed in far different reflections as she continued her observations of Jessie.

"She is surely comely to behold," she thought. "It is no marvel that she should find favour in his eyes; but, unless her face belie her, she has that also which is better."

The entrance of Miss Fannuir gave a new direction to their thoughts.

Rachel warmed into animation, and approaching her, took her extended hand between hers, and, in reply to her friend's kind greeting, replied:

"It rejoiceth me to see thee." Then, gazing on her lovingly, she added, "and thou art well too, and strong, and young—almost as young and fair as this thy niece."

"Ah! Rachel," said Miss Fannuir, tapping her cheek, "how have you, under the safeguard of a Quaker cap, learned to flatter?"

"Flatter!" repeated Rachel, with a smile; "nay, not so. I have heard a man, learned in the law, tell my father that evil words, if not false, were no libel. Then fair words, if true, are no flattery. Are we allowed to utter truth only when it giveth pain?"

"The truth—that is just the question. I own, however, I am, in health at least, much improved. My niece has been my best physician. But," added Miss Fannuir, with a look of kind scrutiny, "you are a little thinner, and rather paler. What have those strict Cumberland friends been doing with you? I am glad to see, however, that my favourite hair has not turned Quaker yet."

"No," said Rachel, with a smile, smoothing away some refractory curls that had escaped from her cap, "no, though I do try to make it better conform."

"And now happens it that you have been so long returned without coming to see me till I sent for you? That is not like you, Rachel."

Rachel, dropping her eyelids and folding her hands, for an instant offered no excuse, while Jessie, moved by pity and curiosity, listened for her answer.

"It hath not been my fault, but it hath been a sore grief to me. I know thou wilt pardon me if I cannot farther satisfy thee."

Miss Fannuir, supposing it to be some restrictions on the part of her aunt, who feared any influence at variance with Quakerism, set the matter at rest by saying, "You deserve my confidence, Rachel, because you never doubt it. And now let us go to papa, who expects you in his room, because not well enough to leave it."

She led the way, and Rachel prepared to follow her, but Jessie could not part with her thus.

"Let us," said she, "be better acquainted. When you have the time, will you come to see me too, and allow me to visit you?"

"It is kindly spoken of thee, Jessie, but it is, nevertheless, not best for thee, nor for me, thus to do. Do not think me unthankful; I feel that I should love thee well, were it permitted. Farewell!" and she was gone.

"So," thought Jessie, "my overtures rejected. But what a majesty there is in truth and simplicity! Now I, in the same circumstances, would have gone beating about for excuses, in order not to compromise myself by an allusion to the real fact. She comes directly to the point. 'It is not best for thee nor for me,' in which, too she would be perfectly right were matters as she probably believes; that is, if I were indeed her rival. I shall make another attempt, however."

For this there was no opportunity. Rachel came daily at the appointed hour, but was immediately conducted to Mr. Fannuir's room, whence, when dismissed, she left the house as noiselessly as she came.

And when, in the course of a week, he was so far better that he received her in the parlour, it was evidently expected that Jessie should withdraw; for, though his displeasure was now only manifested by a punctilious politeness, it was not abated.

Pained by this seclusion, and the strange position assigned her, still Jessie could not but admit the happy effect of the present arrangement on her grandfather.

Whether that he had a secret satisfaction in the infliction of condign punishment on her, or the tranquillising ways of the little Quaker—her gentle tones, the sedative effect of her phraseology, her good reading, her immovable placidity, which seemed to act like oil on ruffled waters—or her beauty, which, he having seen little of her of late, appeared to take him by surprise—or all together, could not be said. Certain it was, however, that, like "the little maid carried away captive out of the land of Israel,"

she had brought healing to the house. The gout disappeared, and an unusual calm succeeded.

One day, as Jessie had just made her compulsory exit from the parlour, she was met by Henry in the hall, who stealthily giving her a signal, she followed him into the drawing-room.

"Jessie," said he, "I must speak to you. Do you know that Mrs. Marley says that grandpapa is quite taken with Rachel, who, as she tells me, 'has bewitched the old gentleman.' This has put new hope into me: what if she should so gain his favour as to overcome his objections?"

"Well, but, my good cousin," replied Jessie, mischievously, "how could that help you? You say that Rachel is herself inexorable."

"Oh, she would not be so—you know she could not—if every obstacle were removed."

"But—another thing, Harry—how can you be sure that Rachel may not play 'The Irish Widow' in earnest, and, finding she has captivated the grandfather, sacrifice the grandson?"

"Why—why—you don't—what do you mean, Jessie?" exclaimed he, gasping with alarm and astonishment; "what can you mean?"

"Only just what I say. I, of course, am ignorant of all such things; but mamma, who knows the world, often declares that no marriage would ever surprise her—that the wisest and silliest, the oldest and youngest, are equally unreliable in this matter."

"Well, but, Jessie, you distress me; don't talk so; 'tis absurd: do be serious."

"I am serious, and, moreover, quite reasonable. Rachel has rejected you. She is, therefore, as you must admit, perfectly at liberty. Grandpapa is a handsome, hale old gentleman, and, when he chooses, can be captivating. More than this, she considers you engaged to me, which, of course, you ought to be, if people ever did in matrimony what they ought to do. It is not my place to undecieve her, and you can not, because she has sent you to Coventry. Now, before we can all stand in our proper places, grandpapa, who thinks that everything, like murder, 'if it were done, it is well it were done quickly,' will have the banns published, and you and I will be invited to walk as 'chief mourners.'"

"If I thought such a thing possible," exclaimed Henry, "I would—"

"Fall down and worship me! I suppose," interrupted Jessie, with mock gravity; "but I warn you, my goddessship would be immovable."

"No, no," replied he, passionately; "I would tear her from my heart, and never more have faith in woman! But I won't think of it. 'Tis an absurdity! You don't believe it; you cannot."

"I believe nothing, because I have nothing on which to found belief. You ought to know how far you can trust her. But no, dear Harry, do not look so distressed; I am only taking my revenge on you and grandpapa. Rachel's face cannot deceive. She may be firm even to obstinacy, but never mercenary or heartless."

Henry, though rejecting what his better sense assured him did not deserve a thought, could not be quite easy under these suggestions, even when retracted.

He reflected on all the extraordinary marriages of which he had ever heard, till he almost persuaded himself that this one was possible.

His situation, tantalising before—daily under the same roof with Rachel, yet not daring to speak to her—became now intolerable, and he resolved, at all hazards, to see her.

Accordingly, the next morning, when, having performed her usual duty, she was on her return, and proceeding through the wood which separated her from her home, she heard steps behind, and feared that she was followed. She would not betray it, however, even by a look, but pursued her way, as if unconscious. They gained on her—they were at her side—still, she neither turned her head nor raised her eyes.

In the days of their childhood, Henry had

playfully imitated her mode of speech. Affection had adopted what sport began.

"Rachel!" at length, he said, in a hesitating voice; "Rachel! may I not speak to thee?" She was silent, and again he entreated.

Without slackening her pace or raising her eyes, she at length replied:

"I have neither might nor right to prevent thy speaking; but let it be what befits thee to say, and me to hear."

"Oh, Rachel! thou knowest that there is but one thing I can say—forgive me! Be again to me what thou hast so long been! Thou, whom only I have loved, or can ever love!"

She stopped suddenly, and, turning toward him a face pale but unmoved, said deliberately and coldly:

"Thy grandfather is pleased to require at my hand certain small services, the which I gladly render; but I will not again cross his threshold unless thou leave me."

"Say, then, only that thou dost not hate me; nay, hate me, if thou wilt: anything but this deadly coldness."

"I may not vex myself at thy bidding," she replied.

"Rachel, I cannot bear this. Accuse me! scorn me! anything that shows human feeling!"

But no word was returned; she only walked faster, as if anxious to escape him.

Stung by her manner past endurance, and, for the moment, yielding to the suspicions that had been infused into him, he placed himself in her path, and exclaimed, with violence:

"It is so! I understand you at last: do not think to blind me; I am sacrificed, not to a just resentment, but to your ambition! Poor and dependant as I am, you do well to cast me off for one who, if more than three times your age, can make you mistress of Glenwater!"

The words were hardly uttered before they were repented.

The lightning that shot from those dark eyes brought quick conviction of her indignant innocence, and of his own folly.

"I thank thee, Henry Fannuir," she said; "thou hast done me thy last and best favour; thou hast extinguished the small spark of kindness that yet warmed my heart toward thee."

Humbled and alarmed, he implored her pardon, and attempted to take her hand; but, disengaging it, she exclaimed:

"Let me pass! thy path and mine here part for ever! Let me pass."

"Oh, Rachel, canst thou leave me thus, without a word, or hope of forgiveness? I am wretched. Pity, if thou wilt not love me. Tell me what I can do to show thee my repentance."

A slight tremor of her voice betrayed the effect of this appeal, but her manner was unchanged.

"All that I ask at thy hands is that thou hinder me not in my duty to thy grandfather."

Henry no longer ventured to oppose her.

Retreating from before her, he permitted her to proceed, while he turned homeward with a heavy heart.

Meanwhile, Rachel, having got beyond sight and sound, seated herself under a tree, not to rest, but to weep unseen.

Here she gave way to a gush of feeling, the more violent because long suppressed.

Tears, and even groans, attested her sorrow. Suddenly she checked herself.

"Foolish and wicked that I am," thought she; "why am I thus disquieted? Surely no new trial has come upon me. What if he, indeed, love me still; what though report of him and his cousin be untrue; what if I forgive all that is past? it mattereth not—my duty remaineth."

"It cannot be shunned but by returning evil for good. 'Thy friend and thy father's friend forget not.' Then how may I, in return for all the kindness rendered to me and mine, steal away the hope of their house? No, I will not do it, even though my heart should burst. 'Tis well that I turn on him a cold countenance, even

that he thinketh me unfeeling and cruel. Be it so."

Then, adjusting her cap and hat—in her agitation, nearly fallen off—smoothing her hair, and wiping away the traces of her tears, she rose, and slowly proceeding, was so far tranquillised, on reaching home, as to escape question or observation.

(To be Continued.)

THE French Government has just published the statistics of the entries into the Exhibition during the months of May and June. In May, 1,666,679 entered; in June, 2,555,523. The receipts during these months amounted to 3,232,963 fr.—that is, 650,842fr. more than the amount received during the corresponding months at the Exhibition of 1867.

SCIENCE.

AN EXTRAORDINARY INVENTION.

THE latest scientific story is told thus: The "Saturday Review" once declared that the greatest benefactor of the human race would be he who could enable men to drink an unlimited quantity of wine without getting drunk. Such a man has been found. Dr. Bell invented the telephone, but its wonders pale before the telegraphograph. This is an electric machine by which the palate can be tickled and pleased by any flavour, and for any length of time, without fear of indigestion or of inebriety.

By putting soup, or fish, or wine into a receptacle connected with a powerful battery, the taste of the daintiest viands can be conveyed along a telegraph wire for miles, and to an unlimited number of *bons-vivants*. They have only to put the wire in their mouths, and they seem to be eating and drinking. They may get tipsy or overfed; but the moment the contact is broken the evil effects pass off, and nothing remains but a "delightful exhilaration." The inventor, however, keeps the *modus operandi* a perfect secret, and wishes to perfect it before he discloses it to the world.

NEW METHOD OF ELECTRO-PLATING

A new method of electro-plating has been discovered by Professor A. W. Wright, which promises to be of great utility. Taking advantage of the fact that the various metals may be volatilised by the electrical current, he provides a hollow vessel, from which the air is partially exhausted; within this vessel he arranges opposite to each other the two poles of an induction coil; the article to be electro-plated, a bit of glass, for example, is suspended between the poles; to the negative pole is attached a small piece of the metal that is to be deposited on the glass. From three to six pint Grove cells are employed, yielding, by means of the induction coil, an electric spark from 2 inches to 3 inches in length. Under the influence of this spark a portion of the metal of the electrode is converted into gas, or volatilised, and condenses upon the cooler surface of the suspended glass, forming a most brilliant and uniform deposit. The thickness of the plating thus produced may be regulated at will.

NEW USE FOR LEMON VERBENA.—The well known fragrant garden favourite, the sweet-scented or lemon verbena (*Lippia citriodora*), seems to have other qualities to recommend it than those of the fragrance for which it is usually cultivated. The author of a recent work, entitled "Among the Spanish People," describes it as being systematically gathered in Spain, where it is regarded as a fine stomachic and cordial. It is used either in the form of a cold decoction, sweetened, or five or six leaves are put into a teacup, and hot tea poured upon them. The author says, that the flavour of the tea thus

prepared "is simply delicious, and no one who has drunk his Pekoe with it will ever again drink it without a sprig of lemon verbena." And he further states that if this be used one need "never suffer from flatulence, never be made nervous or old maidish, never have cholera, diarrhoea, or loss of appetite."

THE WHISPERS OF NORMAN CHASE.

CHAPTER XLIX.

What could her grief be? She had loved him not,
Nor given him cause to deem himself beloved;
Nor could he be a part of that which preyed
Upon her mind—a spectre of the past.

THE DREAM.

BEFORE the prosecution could put a single question Mathew Drake's counsel interposed: "Lady Norman, it is not for me to remind their lordships of what the law of England is. Upon your oath, can you tell us who lies buried in the vault at Norman Chase? The prisoner is charged with the murder of Sir Norman Hedley, and of no one else. Was it Sir Norman Hedley? Will you swear that it was? Did you ever see your husband's corpse? Upon your oath, I say, is it his body lying in that grave?" The question appeared to astound her, as it did everybody else in court, the judges not excepted.

Never, for an instant, had the idea of a doubt entered into her mind.

Yet the whole terrible truth was plain. The law required then, as it does now, that the corpus delicti, the thing said to be stolen or the person said to be murdered, should be, beyond all possibility of misconception, identified.

And she had never looked upon the dead man at whose tomb she had wept those penitential tears.

There had been an inquest, it was true, but the victim, in the verdict, had been named "Henry Mainwaring."

She remained silent, turning her gaze in utter bewilderment from the judges to the prisoner, and round the stifling Court.

"You must answer," she was told.

"Will you pledge your oath to it?" repeated the lawyer, fully conscious of his advantage.

"No, I cannot," she slowly replied.

"Then I presume, my lords," said the triumphant gentleman in the grey horsehair wig and black silk gown, "that there is an end of the case?"

"We have another witness," quietly remarked his opponent.

This announcement on the part of the Crown counsel produced a considerable commotion, which was intensified upon the usher calling:

"Henry Mainwaring, alias Sir Norman Hedley."

The interest of the trial, tragic all through, became still more tragic than ever.

Consternation fell upon the prisoner's soul.

Would the false baronet answer to his name? If so, what would he tell of himself or of others?

Especially what would he tell of the crime?

This was the danger he had feared least, and yet it was the one he dreaded most.

Lady Norman pressed one hand upon her heart and the other across her eyes.

Evelyn appeared unconscious of what was passing around her.

The magistrates, flanking the judges in a cohort, awaited in mute expectancy the apparition of their quondam neighbour, whose disguise had been thus ruthlessly torn away.

Haggard, wan, and worn to a shadow of his former self, he, never once looking at them, still replied with solemn emphasis to the questions which had been put to him.

"Your name is Henry Mainwaring?" he was asked.

"It is."

"Not Norman Hedley?"

"Not Norman Hedley."

"Then why did you so style yourself?"

"It was a private agreement between us. We were both under a vow never to divulge the reason. It referred to events of long years ago, having nothing to do with the murder at Norman Chase."

To the deep disappointment of the audience, the subject was declared irrelevant.

"You were at the Chase that night?"

"I was."

"Did you see anything?"

"I did."

"What was it?"

The accused and the witness exchanged one glance.

If an unuttered oath could have killed him Henry Mainwaring would not have lived to tell another word of the hideous story.

"I saw Mathew Drake enter Sir Norman's bedroom. I swear it was Sir Norman; he was my oldest friend. I saw Mathew Drake lean over him, and listen to his breath. I saw him pass the cord round his neck with a quickness he had learned in India. I heard the awful shriek, and knew that the deed had been done."

They tortured him with questions. Why he had given no alarm; why he had not interfered; what he was doing there at that time of the night; why he had not given this evidence before; how his supposed daughter came to accuse him; why he had hidden himself away; why he had not even brought this defence forward when on trial for his life; what he had been wandering about the Chase for at unearthly hours of the night; and what the crime was, apart from this, to which he had been heard to confess.

A light, as of hope, illuminated the prisoner's face as he saw that each one of these questions was anguish to the unhappy man, upon whom they were forced with relentless asperity by the advocate for the defence.

The answers, similarly summed up, were as follows:

That he felt paralysed by what he saw; that the murderer, he was convinced, would have retaliated with a counter accusation on the spot had he denounced him; that his mind must have partly given way for a time, because he had no peace by day or night after witnessing that deed; that Evelyn's inexplicable words and manner—perfectly intelligible now—agonised him almost to madness; that he carried in his breast a dreadful secret which Mathew Drake threatened to disclose.

"Do you dream its disclosure now?" he was asked.

He remained silent.

The question was repeated.

Then he answered, as if with difficulty:

"Not so much now as I did then."

"Why?"

"Because," he said, looking round the Court, and fixing a gaze of ineffable love and pain upon the young, pale face of Evelyn Hedley, "I thought she—waving his hand towards her while quickly averting his face—"was my daughter—my only and adored child."

Mercifully, Augusta Fairleigh had been taken away the moment her parent's name was announced, so that she was spared the misery of seeing how utterly she was without a home in the heart of this father, who had given away his whole affection, and had none left for her.

"Then perhaps you have no objection to tell the Court what it was."

He hesitated. He set his teeth firmly together.

Some supreme effort of the soul appeared to shake him.

A moment or two passed, during which a silence that might, as it were, have been heard, pervaded the excited crowd. He seemed about to speak.

"Never! never! my father! My only father that I ever knew! Utter those words—or would you see me dead at your feet?"

It was Evelyn, standing erect and holding out her hands imploringly to him. His eyes filled with tears, and he said:

"I am not bound to make any confessions,"—and, after waiting awhile, as to be further questioned, he slowly left the witness-box.

But not before Mathew Drake, notwithstanding all efforts to keep him quiet, had shouted:

"Then I will tell his secret! He dares me now. It is this: He, Henry Mainwaring, the murderer of Sir Norman Hedley—"

He had overshot his mark. They silenced him.

The Court might have listened had he gone straight to that which all, even the judges, were burning to know; but upon this attempt to fling the charge against himself in the face of another, authority was restored; the trial proceeded; and the judge addressed the jury—speeches of counsel for the prisoner not being, at that time, permitted.

The jury retired to their room, and Mathew Drake was removed to his cell, there to tremble while they deliberated.

In about half an hour he was summoned back to the dock.

The jury were returning. As they entered he cast one imploring, appealing look upon each in turn.

But his agony was not yet over. They had only come to ask a question of the judge—might they recall the witness, Henry Mainwaring, for a moment? Yes, they might.

Wondering what new pang was to be inflicted upon him, he resumed his place.

He had been asked why he had been wandering about the corridors of Norman Chase at so late an hour on the night of the murder.

To this he had given no answer. Would he give one now?

The question appeared to relieve rather than embarrass him, for he promptly replied:

"I was on my way to Sir Norman Hedley's room, to release him from a vow which made us both unhappy. He knew himself to be Evelyn's father, and it galled him to see all her endowments bestowed upon me. I had made up my mind, and could not rest until I had carried out my resolve. I might have changed it by the morning."

The explanation was received in silence. Again the jury retired, again the prisoner was taken from the bar; and again the judges retired.

It was evening now, and growing dark. Long hours had passed since the trial commenced; but none had thought of stirring from his place.

Time went by, and still the terrible twelve were absent.

The dusk deepened into gloom, and a few poor oil-lamps were placed in different parts of the Court, while clusters of wax-candles were lit on either side of the judge's desk.

A subdued murmur of many voices succeeded to the silence that had hitherto reigned. The night wore on.

Every face looked pale in that imperfect light.

The anxiety grew painful. What were the doubts of the jury? Did their prolonged absence bode ill to the accused?

Hush! They are coming—they have come. The judges resume their seats upon the bench. For a third time that day, the prisoner was placed at the bar.

His countenance was of a deadly pallor. One glance of agonising inquiry, and he knew his fate.

The days of Mathew Drake, in this world, were numbered.

There is no necessity for prying into the secrets of the murderer's cell.

Let that night of utter woe, of futile regrets, of vain vindictive thoughts, of remorse changing into fear, of involuntary shuddering over the irreparable past, of horrors darkening in the future—pass for him, as he sat there alone, gnawing the chains of convicted crime.

He had been forbidden to expect mercy. He

knew of none to intercede for him—least of all, the young girl he had dared to love.

One last desperate hope, which was almost akin to despair, lingered in the recesses of his ever-plotting mind. He would obtain an interview with Henry Mainwaring.

Some broken remnant of the influence he once possessed over him; some power of appealing to his yet undiminished love of Evelyn; some hint of the terrific cloud which, arising from her father's very grave, might blacken her whole future life, would, he thought it possible, induce him to give a last chance to the man who, condemned though he was, still kept one horrible secret in his breast, to hide or to reveal as he chose.

There was not much difficulty in obtaining permission for the interview, but much in persuading Henry Mainwaring to grant it.

"What do you want of me?" said the shattered, prematurely-aged man, seating himself and preparing to listen.

"To save me. You can."

"Why should I?"

"You know better than I could tell you. Hear me out before you speak. Upon your evidence chiefly, I was convicted. You can undo the effect of it. Petition the Crown. Say you were only half master of yourself while giving it. You spoke of your mind having partly given way. Declare that it has been the same ever since. They will believe you."

With a great deal more, urged over and over again to the same purpose, until the miserable man actually thought he had hit upon a sure means for his own deliverance.

His visitor listened with his head buried in his hands, speaking no word, making no change of attitude, until Drake had finished. Then he looked up and faced him:

"And what is to be my motive in all this?" he asked, in a voice so hard that it inspired little confidence in the mind of the wretched felon.

"Evelyn's happiness; though not your daughter, you love her dearly still, Henry Mainwaring."

The lips of his sorrow-stricken visitor quivered as he put another question:

"And if I refuse?"

"I will tell her your secret."

"She knows it already."

With a bitter moan, the convict sank in his chair.

When he recovered himself he was alone.

About a week from that day, Herbert Leathorne went early to Norman Chase.

To his surprise, Evelyn herself opened the door.

Still more did he wonder when she said:

"Touch my hand, Herbert, and go. I could not send the message to you by a servant. I must be alone all this day, asking mercy for the soul of a sinner."

Suddenly he remembered, took both her hands in his, kissed them gently, and with one look at the pure, sorrowful, pitying face, went his way with love unutterable in his heart.

For on that noon, in presence of a mighty multitude, and over the gateway of a huge, gloomy prison, Mathew Drake came forth for a brief moment into the light of the sun, glanced once at the surging mass of humanity below, and once at the hot sky above, saw something dim pass over his eyes, and belonged no more to this world.

CHAPTER L.

From mighty wrongs to petty perfidy
Have I not seen what human beings could do?
From the loud roar of foaming calumny
To the small whisper of the paltry few.

CHARLES HAROLD.

THERE was great work in restoring order to both the Hedley and the Fairleigh Estates, but the Baronbury lawyers, who could find no apologies too humble for their treatment of Evelyn, found their task considerably lightened by the fact that no one appeared to contest the final settlement.

Lady Norman was undoubtedly owner, and Evelyn, by her acknowledgment and under the will simultaneously, heiress.

No more midnight prowlings, watchings, and whisperings, were to be dreaded now; no more ghastly discoveries or haunting sounds.

The crime had been avenged, and the criminal was gone whence he would not return.

"Let us," said Lady Norman to her daughter, "collect and destroy every relic of that melancholy past, except what it may be essential for the sake of your rights to keep."

And Evelyn gladly agreed. Only—and this was her wisest resolve in life—she would not part, at any rate for a time, with the paper on which the strange confession, that had so startled her, and made her heart sink, was written. But she spoke no word upon the subject.

One day, however, longing, despite herself, to share more deeply the secrets of her own and her mother's history, she stole into Lady Norman's room and found her reading a letter. The pale, proud face was wet with tears. She laid her hand over the little missive as she placed it on her work-table, saying:

"Evelyn, my child, this is sent to me by Richard Thornton. It encloses a message from him whom you have known. See—"

The words were:

"Tell her all, except that one thing. Adjure her, Gertrude, in my name, by the dear love I bore her when I thought I had found a child, never to open, but to burn the packet which is in her hands."

The young girl was about to interrupt, but the lady checked her, and she also checked herself. Lady Norman went on:

"I will obey him," she said, "and you must obey me. Never ask to know more than I tell you now, and never so much as look at the confession he sent you. Evelyn, if you owe him no obedience, do you owe him no gratitude?"

The young girl professed herself abundantly grateful for the love that should never have been hers, but wondered at the curious tone in which this question was uttered.

Her face expressed inquiry. Lady Norman read it accurately.

"Yes, gratitude," she continued. "Evelyn, but for his presence, when your words and mine would have failed to bring Heaven's justice upon the head of a villain, did his testimony condemn him, and deliver us, and the world, from a living curse?"

"There was a terrible resemblance at that moment between this mother and that daughter."

Evelyn only looked her answer.

"Child," Lady Norman resumed, "when I was a very young girl I lived in India, where my father held high rank in the army. They called me beautiful, and I think I was, for I am like you."

What daughter could refuse to reward this heart-born flattery by an embrace?

"There were many who came to me with their adulations. I did not despise, but I did not value them. I thought little of love, except as a tale that is told, until one stood near me—I need not weary you with the story of his wooing—and wound himself around my heart. You do not believe, my child, that I could have loved anyone not seeming to be lofty, and noble, and generous. He was indeed all that—"

"And who was he?"

"Captain Henry Mainwaring. But he had a rival, whose countenance, tender at other times, always blackened at his approach. I dreaded their mutual hatred. I feared for the life of the one or the other. Suddenly, they appeared to have become friends. When Mainwaring was not with me, he was with Norman Hedley."

Evelyn gave a great start, as she repeated the name.

"Another man had now appeared upon the scene—well, I need not say what he was, if I tell you who he was—Mathew Drake. He was neither a gentleman nor a menial, but held some indefinite position in relation to each, being

deep in the confidence of the two, yet never in the society of both at the same time. Evelyn, he was dangerously clever, and had the most extraordinary associates. I have heard since that he was suspected of belonging to a gang of Thugs, or secret stranglers."

The young girl shuddered. She thought of the deadly cord discovered in the room of the murdered guest at Norman Chase.

"You remember a certain dagger. Richard Thornton will never cease believing that with it Drake assassinated his young wife. Justly or not, that is counted among his crimes. You saw how he blanched at the sight of it. Well, the days went on, and I loved Henry Mainwaring more and more. When he came and asked me to be his wife there was no human reason why I should not hear his appeal, and respond to it. We were betrothed, and the marriage day drew near."

Lady Norman, at this point, trembled so as to frighten her young listener.

Still she nerved herself once more, though the last faint trace of colour had fled from her cheeks.

"Then, Sir Norman Hedley also offered me his hand, and my heart was filled with sorrow by the passionateness of his pleadings. He knew nothing of my engagement."

"And you accepted him, my mother?" cried Evelyn, slightly drawing herself away from the woman who was thus pouring out from her heart the confession of her girlhood.

"Do not judge me, my child," she said, flushing to the brows. "I told him the truth, gently and kindly, and he went away with such an aspect of despair upon his face as I never saw on the face of any other human being. Oh! the madness of that miserable day."

Thick-coming reminiscences of the past appeared to confuse her for awhile; but she presently went on:

"I had had my miniature painted, and a forget-me-not ring engraved with my initials, as gifts to Henry on our betrothal. I meant to have given them to him at once, but they were mislaid. Only for a time, however. I thought myself very stupid when, some days afterwards, I found them in a secret enclosure in my jewel-casket. I knew he, my affianced husband, was coming, and when a tap touched the door of my father's library, where I was sitting, I felt sure it was he. It was not; it was Mathew Drake. He addressed me with the utmost courtesy, but looked very pale, and shook, as if with an ague. Miss Champion—my maiden name, Evelyn"—he said, "forgive me; it is no secret that you are the affianced bride of Henry Mainwaring. If you would save him, come, and that instantly."

"Was he really in danger, mamma?" asked Evelyn, now irrepressibly excited.

"Danger is no word for it, my darling. I followed the man, whom I had never yet learned to distrust, without hesitation—though in a state of dreadful fear. I followed him, though fearful, even into a wood, knowing it was full of snakes. We reached an open glade, in the middle of which stood a building. Around it was a great crowd, in white turbans and tunics, beating drums and singing. They groaned when they saw me, and several of them rushed into the interior. We entered, too. There was a ceremony going on. Mathew Drake seized me by the arm, and pointed with his finger."

Lady Norman swooned at her daughter's feet, as her daughter had once swooned at hers. Long and lovingly did that daughter hang over the stricken form, calling for no help, because she was not a stranger to such ministrations, and unwilling, also, to excite the curiosity of the household.

Lady Norman recovered, but with a look of painful terror on her face. She clasped Evelyn by the hand.

"What did I tell you, child?" she asked, with a vehemence which alarmed the young girl.

"That he pointed with his finger."

"No more? Not anything he showed me?"

"Not a word, my mother. But keep the rest for another time. You are ill."



[THE WEIGHT OF MEMORY.]

"No; I have begun, and must finish. All was over, from that moment, between me and Henry Mainwaring. Had I not willed it so—as I did, though it cost me more anguish than I fancied myself, at that young age, capable of feeling, he made it inevitable, by scowling at me when we met—he was then in half-oriental costume—but that was common—and uttering savage words which I never understood until you, my darling, explained them after we had visited your father's grave."

"I explained them! My dearest mother, how was it possible when I never heard a syllable of them, or this before, and do not now even know what they were?"

"Still, you did, my innocent darling—it was when you showed me the lockets. Let me finish. So black a gulf had opened between us that my love, in an instant, sank out of sight in it for ever. My heart took back every thought and throb it had ever given to his. I felt free as though that first affection had been a dream, and, a year later, I married Sir Norman Hedley, your father. Ah! weep my child, though I see happiness in your future. Mine was soon over. You were born. Then, I heard that Mainwaring, also, had taken a wife from among the Eurasian maidens, or children of Europeans, born in the country, the mother—Fairleigh was her father's name—as we all now know, of her who was known as Augusta Fairleigh. But the plot was not complete yet. I had evidence of my husband's falsehood, and he—worth quite as much—of mine. I felt his fondness turning into antipathy. Powerless to interfere—for he had a number of Asiatic servants with him—I thought I saw him steal you from your cradle, an infant, and when I saw you again you were the beautiful girl I am holding in my arms."

"Oh, my mother! How did all this end?"

"He did what Mainwaring had done; I left him, and shut myself up in that Delhi Palace where Herbert found me, and whence I came to save you from Mathew Drake."

"Had he any share in those miseries?" said Evelyn.

"He was the beginning and the end of them. He and they were one. He poisoned the mind of my betrothed by means of a forged portrait, a forged ring, and forged letters—you know, Evelyn, what an adept he was at it; he changed our children at nurse; he joined with Mainwaring to exercise a terrible power over your father, who followed him into the same awful guilt, with his other victim, and who almost broke his heart with penitence, on my account only, however, when he found that he still had a faithful and a dear daughter—for it was not he who stole you, but a cunning villain in disguise; and he gave into Mainwaring's hands an instrument which, you know, he mercilessly used. He never ceased to love me, though he cruelly kept me from my child; your marvellous resemblance to me brought it all back to his heart, married as he had been—for she is dead—and he compelled my husband, by means of the awful secret he possessed, to submit to that personation of himself which led to his cruel murder."

"But, mamma, this seems strange. Whatever the crime was, both equally committed it."

"Which Drake knew, but not Sir Norman. In this way, you see, my child, Mainwaring feared Drake, and Sir Norman feared Mainwaring. Many of your questions are answered now."

"Will you never tell me what that great wickedness was?"

"Never! and now, my beloved child, I have told you all that can ever be told. Whatever pardon may be refused to those unhappy men, we are not their judges. There is no one without something to atone for in that miserable past, not one, except my Evelyn. He implored me to forgive him, and I refused, and that is why you have seen me shed those helpless tears upon his tomb."

The veil was now partially lifted, though not entirely, that had so darkened the lives of the inmates at Norman Chase.

Evelyn reflected anxiously whether or not she should tell Lady Norman of what she had learned from the confession sent to her by Henry Mainwaring, but decided not to.

Surely her mother had sufficiently tortured her own heart by those bitter recollections for that day. She, therefore, only said:

"Let us be as happy as we can; perhaps, my dear mother, a time will come when all those dark days will be to us as so many dreams."

"For you, my child, yes," and the mother and daughter parted.

On her way to her room Evelyn was told that Mr. Herbert Leaholme waited for her in the library.

Thither she went, tenderly hoping that some dew-fall of happiness might dissipate the clouds of that sombre autumn morning.

Her heart beat with fondness as she opened the door.

Herbert Leaholme was standing at a window. He turned as if startled by her entrance. His face was of an ashen hue, but he took her gently in his arms, and gazed lovingly into her eyes, without speaking.

"Something is wrong, Herbert," she said. "Tell me, my love, what is it, and let me console you, if I can."

She console him! Few upon the wide earth stood more in need of consolation than she herself did then.

"How have you borne it? How will you bear it, my poor child?" he went on, smoothing the glossy gold of her hair, and imprinting a light kiss upon her pure, fair forehead.

"I can bear anything, Herbert," she said, standing proudly before him; "anything but suspense."

"The felon! He stabbed you from the very foot of the scaffold," Herbert answered, once more clasping her, as though he dreaded to see her fall. "He left a full confession, with a narrative, and there is not a fireside in England at which the story will not be read to-morrow."

(To be Continued.)



[ANXIOUS INQUIRIES.]

"MY LOVE IS LIKE A RED, RED ROSE."

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"Sinned Against: Not Sinning," &c.

CHAPTER XVI.

It is the little rift within the lute
That by-and-bye will make the music mute,
And ever widening slowly silence all.

TEMMISON.

As MR. LENNOX and Clement Woodleigh pass the Towers, the latter suggests that they alight and walk round the building.

No sooner said than done, and the lawyer is unfeignedly surprised at the generally desolate appearance of the place.

Even more than usual no sight nor sound of human—nor any other—life is there, and Mr. Lennox can scarcely find words strong enough in which to express his surprise.

"Why, I had no idea of this!" he exclaims, in no little perturbation; "suppose we ring, and make some inquiries?"

"You can, of course, do as you please," returns the painter, "but if you take my advice you will just wait until we come properly guarded, so as to overwhelm those who may be on the watch to attack us, as they attacked me."

"Perhaps you are right," replies Mr. Lennox, as he stands a little distance off and gazes at the grand gloomy pile. I am not a superstitious man. Lawyers rarely give way to such fancies," he continues, with a smile, "but I cannot help saying that the Towers looks just such a gloomy place for anything such as you have described to have taken place there!"

And thus it comes to pass that Clement Woodleigh and the lawyer walk through the woodlands of Brakeholme Park, and the lawns

of Petherick Place, until they come in range of the drawing-room windows, whence they are espied by the Lady Isola.

Still arrayed in the royal emerald velvet, the Lady Isola comes forward to greet Mr. Lennox.

Dumb with admiration and surprise, the old lawyer gazes at the vision before him.

Her ripe red lips are parted; her glorious eyes sparkling, and as he gazes at her Mr. Lennox decides that she is the fairest of the Creator's creatures his eyes have ever rested upon.

And so also thinks the painter; and his heart thrills with a rapturous pride as he looks at the beautiful girl he has been the means of rescuing from a living dungeon.

But there is yet another in the apartment, who is curiously affected by the entrance of the two men. Through whose frame something like an electric shock runs from head to foot, and who gazes at one of them as though fascinated.

It is Geraldine Butler.

In one moment she recognises the painter. Recognises him as a man she had once met out in London society, whose name she had not caught, but who had, for want of metal more attractive at the time, devoted himself to her—had whispered soft nothings into her not unwilling ear; had gazed at her with, apparently, his whole soul in his dark eyes, and had been thoroughly amused at finding her such an easy conquest.

The introductions being all effected, Mr. Lennox engages the Lady Isola in conversation.

His attraction in her eyes is, that he knows her father; that father she is so anxious to see and to know something about!

"I can scarcely realise," Mr. Lennox says to her, "how you could have been kept such a prisoner for so long a time."

"I daresay you cannot," replies the girl, her full red lips quivering, "but so it has been, unfortunately. However, tell me of my father."

"What do you wish me to tell you?" he asks, with a little smile at her childish eagerness.

"Tell me all you can about him!" she exclaims; "what he is like, and everything of that kind. Is he like you? or like Mr. Woodleigh? or like Sir Mervyn Petherick?"

"Not like any one of us," he replies, "except perhaps, Mr. Woodleigh."

"Then I am sure I shall like him," she replies, simply, whilst Geraldine Butler's keen eye sees that the painter's face flushes a little at these unthinking, ingenuous words of the Lady Isola. "I am sure I shall like my father all the better, if he is like Mr. Woodleigh, for Mr. Woodleigh was my first friend, and I must, of course, like him better than anyone else."

"Mr. Woodleigh is fortunate," exclaims Geraldine Butler, somewhat sarcastically, as she flirts her fan nervously; "and it is quite refreshing to meet with so much innocence and unconventionality as one finds in the character of the Lady Isola!"

"I quite agree with you, Miss Butler," says Clement Woodleigh, coldly and politely. "The Lady Isola's utter unconsciousness both of her marvellous beauty and also her want of knowledge of the foolish conventionalities of this wicked world, render her exceptionally attractive and fascinating."

Miss Geraldine Butler bites her thin lips. She has been trying to fascinate the handsome painter, and she feels she has failed to do so—at least, up to the present—but Geraldine Butler has made up her mind that Clement Woodleigh shall come into her power in some way or other.

She is a woman who loves money; but she also has a sensual soul, and the handsome and gallant bearing of Clement Woodleigh had made no small impression upon her when she had met him two years before.

Now she thinks he looks even goodlier than when she had last seen him, and as she looks from him to her insignificant-looking cousin, Sir Mervyn Petherick—she thinks she could almost give up the chance of being the mistress of Petherick Place for the joy of sharing a studio and chambers with Clement Woodleigh.

A splendid specimen of English manhood he looks as he stands in the deep embrasure of the window; the late afternoon sun glinting like a glory upon his closely-cropped black curls and dark, brown beard.

Nominally, he is carrying on a conversation with Miss Butler; in reality, he is drinking in every word which passes between Mr. Lennox and the Lady Isola.

"In what way is my father like Mr. Woodleigh?" inquires the girl.

"As far as his height is concerned only, and, indeed, his beard," he added, smiling; "but the Earl of Brakeholme's beard is snow-white."

"Then my father is tall, and has a long, white beard?" says the Lady Isola, as if trying to fix in her mind a mental picture of the parent she cannot recollect. "I shall be so glad to see him, Mr. Lennox."

"I shall take every means to let him know of your state," replies the lawyer.

And then followed a long discussion with Sir Mervyn as to the best means to be pursued to effect an entrance into and a thorough examination of the Towers.

Measures are at length decided upon, and to every detail Geraldine Butler listens attentively.

She is a wise woman in her day and generation.

She utilises everything she hears and sees, and as she has determined to become an important element in the Lady Isola's life, and especially in this strange affair of the search through the Towers, she treasures up every word she hears for future use.

"Saunders," says Miss Geraldine Butler to her maid, as that functionary is arraying her mistress's charms for dinner, "I suppose you have heard the extraordinary story of the Lady Isola Marbourne?"

"Well, yes, miss," returns Saunders, "the servants do say in the hall downstairs as how it is a very queer business altogether."

"Of course it is, Saunders, and now I shall tell you something," continues her mistress, with an air of confidence, "for I know you are to be trusted. The lawyer, Mr. Lennox, who arrived this afternoon, has his doubts as to whether the young woman is the Lady Isola at all."

"Law! miss! You don't say so!" exclaims the Abigail. "Well, I must say that she wasn't much like a lady when she came here to Petherick Place, leastways, so Sir Mervyn's gentleman tells me. She had no shoes nor stockings, and was dressed like a common tramp."

"Exactly!" exclaims Geraldine Butler, triumphantly, delighted at the success of her scheme; "that is what we all suspect. She is an impostor, and we are only just waiting to find her out, and expose her conduct; but of course, Saunders, I tell you this in strict confidence, so you will not breathe a word of it in the servants' hall."

"You can trust me, miss," replies Saunders, virtuously laying her hand upon the region where anatomists tell us the heart is situated.

And Geraldine Butler knew she could trust her waiting woman—knew she could trust her to promulgate the nefarious falsehood throughout that vehmericht which sits in judgment in every house.

The result was, that the Lady Isola, without feeling it much herself, was strangely and shamefully neglected.

She was too ignorant of the service she ought to demand to miss it; but Geraldine Butler had sown the seeds of distrust in the lower strata of the household, and she trusted to her own Machiavellian policy to overcome the prejudices in the Lady Isola's favour which existed in her own class.

CHAPTER XVII.

Do you remember it? For, oh! I do,
That lovely night in June;
How soft your voice, how pale your face,
By the wan light of the moon.

SOME days, it is discovered, must elapse before all the preliminaries necessary for the in-

spection of the Towers can be proceeded with, and in the meantime, Miss Geraldine Butler is not slow to improve the occasion in trying to ingratiate herself with everybody.

To Clement Woodleigh she has already rendered life a burden; and were it not that she seldom allows the Lady Isola to be by herself, and that therefore he has no other chance of speaking to the latter, he would cut Miss Butler's society altogether.

But she has no intention of allowing him to do anything of the kind.

Miss Butler is beginning to think that her chances of becoming the mistress of Petherick Place are very slight indeed, therefore, she makes friends of the Mammon of unrighteousness, and lays siege to Clement Woodleigh.

She sees he has neither eyes nor ears for anyone, save for the lovely Lady Isola; and Geraldine Butler hates her with the hate that only one underbred, jealous woman can feel for another, and she vows a vow that if she can hinder it, that the Lady Isola and Clement Woodleigh shall never be more than mere friends.

Nearly a fortnight has passed away. Sir Mervyn Petherick is apparently quite recovered from his accident.

The Earl of Brakeholme has been tracked to some out-of-the-way place, and has telegraphed that he is on his way home; and everything is arranged for the examination of the Towers on the morrow.

The matter has leaked out, notwithstanding the precautions taken, and has excited no small amount of excitement in the surrounding neighbourhood.

The brothers, Mark and Stephen Jordan, have requested to form part of the exploring party, and at Clement Woodleigh's representation, they have been granted their desire.

The time is going on, and Geraldine Butler has not accomplished anything of that she has set herself to perform.

She is no idiot, and she sees that there is no chance whatever of her attracting her cousin, Sir Mervyn.

Indeed, the latter has talked matters over confidentially with his aunt, and has all but told her that he considers it quite providential an earl's daughter being thus thrown in his way, and that he hopes yet the family may be allied with nobility.

This has all been gall and wormwood to Geraldine Butler, but she never betrays herself.

She knows full well that the Lady Isola will never consent to be the mistress of Petherick Place, for her whole soul has gone out to and is wrapped up in Clement Woodleigh.

Bitter still has been the knowledge which Geraldine Butler, with the keen eye of jealous passion, has discovered, that the Lady Isola's love has been reciprocated, for she sees that Clement Woodleigh only lives and breathes but in the presence of his lovely lady.

"Either one or the other must leave this!" mutters Geraldine Butler to herself, as she dresses for dinner on this day before the quest at the Towers; "one or the other, and it shall be her if I can compass it!"

Her sallow face looks stern and vindictive as she says so; but when she descends to the drawing-room it is dressed in smiles, and no one would have guessed the smouldering volcano beneath.

Milliners and dressmakers have been given carte blanche to supply the Lady Isola with every requisite becoming her station in life; so she descends to the drawing-room on this particular evening attired in a pale amber silk, richly trimmed with black lace; one magnificent yellow rose nestling amongst the heavy coils of her luxuriant hair. Verily—she looks

A sight to make an old man young,

and so think the two men—both Sir Mervyn Petherick and Clement Woodleigh—as they gaze at her.

Each one would like to try his fate with her,

but each one hesitates, each from a different reason.

Sir Mervyn hesitates because she is his guest, and he does not like to seem to take advantage of her unprotected state, and Clement Woodleigh tries to crush down his love, because he feels that between them there is the awful barrier of social distinction.

Quick-witted Geraldine Butler is quite aware of how the land lies.

She knows the feelings of each young man just as well as though they had made her their confidante respectively; and as she looks at the lovely girl, Geraldine Butler more than ever hates her.

The Lady Isola's lovely face flushes and pales, and then lights up tenderly at every inflection of Clement Woodleigh's voice.

The girl is so unsophisticated, that she does not know she betrays her emotion so fully, for she has not yet learnt the grand art of repressing her feelings.

They are seated about the drawing-room in little groups after dinner, the gentlemen have joined them very soon.

Clement Woodleigh seats himself at a piano standing in a recess.

The lovely Lady Isola is seated near him; and striking a few chords, he, without any further prelude or invitation, sings of "that lovely night in June."

"Why, Woodleigh?" exclaimed Sir Mervyn as the last notes of the singer's grand voice died away, "I had no idea you were a musician!"

"Ah! my dear fellow!" returns the painter, laughing and rising from the instrument, "you don't know half my perfections!"

As he speaks he catches sight of the Lady Isola's face.

It is as though transfigured, for it shines with an almost unearthly beauty.

She has taken the words of the song to herself, and believes it to be but the outpouring of the painter's soul towards her.

He knows this instinctively; and as he is only human, and passionately in love with this beautiful creature, it pleases and it flatters him. He thinks he will follow up the illusion—therefore, reseating himself at the piano, he sings song after song, all after the same fashion as the first.

Clement Woodleigh sees the girl is rapidly becoming more and more entranced.

No one in the room but himself can see her face as she sits in an embrasure of the deep mullioned window; but it is enough for him that she sits with her glorious eyes riveted on his face; her hands clasped before her; her crimson lips parted, and her eyes dilated with joy and excitement.

Sir Mervyn has left the room, Mr. Lennox and Mrs. Butler are having a quiet game of cribbage at the further end of the spacious apartment, and Geraldine Butler is nowhere to be seen.

The painter rises from the instrument and approaches the Lady Isola.

"Are you fond of music?" he asks, seating himself on the window-seat beside her.

"I like your music," she replies, with quivering lips. "I never heard anything like it!"

"You are very good to say so," he says, with a pleased smile, as he looks into her glorious eyes. "When you leave this, and go to London, you will hear much better music."

The girl shivered.

"I do not want ever to leave this. I think," she replies, innocently and musingly, "I should like to live here for ever, and hear you sing every day."

Clement Woodleigh is very much in love, but Clement Woodleigh is an honourable man; therefore, he will not take advantage of the girl's innocence and of the opportunity, and talk of love to her.

It would be inexpressibly sweet to hear from her own lips the avowal which she has so unconsciously made.

"Perhaps I may have the pleasure of seeing you in London," he says, gently, "and then I shall be only too happy to tell you if I give you any pleasure."

"Perhaps!" she exclaims, with a startled air, as she lays her hand on his. "There must be no 'perhaps' about it! You will come and see me every day, will you not?"

"We shall see about that," he replies, rising.

The man is fast losing his head, and feels he must put an end to the conversation.

Pleading an engagement with Sir Mervyn, he begs the Lady Isola to excuse him.

"He must come and see me," she says to herself, as he leaves the room. "I cannot live without seeing him now!"

CHAPTER XVIII.

Earth has no hate like love to anger turned,
Or hell no fury like a woman scorned.

AND where is Geraldine Butler all this time?

Scarcely had Clement Woodleigh finished his first song than she softly and noiselessly left the room.

She had heard the man's heart in the passionate words and ringing tones; and a demon of jealousy took possession of her soul, and she rushed out into the open air.

The stars of the summer night are palely twinkling in the opalescent sky; with its piled-up masses of clouds that look like the domes and spires of the Eternal City.

The little stars sit one by one, each on its golden throne.

But Geraldine Butler heeds them not; she knows nought of the beauties of earth or sky which surround her; only knows that she is consumed with a wild devouring love for Clement Woodleigh, and that he is as indifferent to her as he is to her mother.

"I believe he will never even give me a passing thought," she says, bitterly, to herself, as she walks on heedlessly—"not even a passing thought, as soon as I am out of sight! Whilst I—I shall never cease to think of him! For two years it has been the desire of my life to meet him. I am no more to him than the veriest stranger! He is as courteous to a maid-servant as he is to me! He has neither eyes nor ears for any but the Lady Isola, and I hate her! I hate her!" she exclaims, vehemently, unconsciously raising her voice. "I hate the Lady Isola, and I wish she were out of the way!"

Geraldine Butler has wandered away beyond the trimly kept lawns and pleasure grounds. She has come to a sort of avenue of overarching limes, through which there is a path of soft brown woodland soil, sufficient to muffle the sound of her footsteps.

Therefore, she gives a little start as a woman—a tall woman with wild-looking frizzed hair—stands before her.

Even the self-possessed Geraldine Butler gives a little scream, and is about to return by the way whence she came, when the woman lays her hand upon her arm, and says:

"I have been following you. I was looking in at the windows of Petherick Place when I saw you leave the room and come here."

"Let me go! Why did you follow me! If you want money I have none with me. Let me go!"

"Hush!" says the woman warningly, "don't make a noise! Don't speak so loudly!"—she still keeps her hand upon Geraldine's arm—"I shall not let you go until you make me a promise."

Geraldine Butler is genuinely alarmed. This weird-looking creature puts her face closer to hers and says:

"I have been watching for this opportunity for long enough. Ay! ever since you came to Petherick Place! I was afraid the time would go over and all would fail. I want no money from you, but I want the Lady Isola!"

"What?"

Geraldine Butler looks at the woman in genuine astonishment.

"Yes," she continues, "I want the Lady Isola! You hate her! I know you do! I

heard you say so! You hate her because she has taken from you the man you love. It is true? You know it is?"

Rapidly thoughts flit through Geraldine Butler's plotting mind.

This woman fascinates her. She "holds her with her glittering eye" quite as much as with her hand upon her arm.

"Who are you?" she asks of the woman.

"I am Isola Marbourne!" she replies, "the baseborn sister of the Earl of Brakeholme."

"It was you who kept the Lady Isola a prisoner?" says Geraldine Butler, recollecting the whole story she has heard from both the Lady Isola and from Clement Woodleigh.

"The same! Give her into my power again, and we shall take her away where no one shall ever hear of her again."

Geraldine Butler's heart beats fast! Here is a chance of getting rid of her rival. Shall she avail herself of it!

"It is too late to do so," she says. "The investigation of the Towers is to take place to-morrow."

"It will be too late if you wait until to-morrow!" exclaims the woman, giving her a shake. "Idiot! it must be done to-night!"

"But how can it be done?" asks Geraldine Butler, who, daring and wary woman as she is, cannot see a way of accomplishing her nefarious designs.

For reply the woman gives a little low, peculiar cry.

As though they were the autochthones of the place, three men suddenly appear before her.

"You have my answer," says the woman; "try and delude the Lady Isola into coming out to stroll with you. She will soon be gagged and quietly carried away."

Even Geraldine Butler feels her blood run cold.

"I will do it," she says, slowly; "where am I to bring the Lady Isola to?"

"To the entrance to this path. It leads just out of the shrubbery," replies the woman. "Go now, or it will be too late."

With nervous haste Geraldine Butler retraces her steps.

It is quite dusk, and she pauses at the low French window of the drawing-room to see that her victim is within.

Yes; there she is sitting at the far-off window, just where Clement Woodleigh has left her.

Geraldine Butler enters softly and lays her hand upon the Lady Isola's shoulder.

The girl gives a start.

"I did not know you had come in," she says, raising her radiant face to the set, pale, stern one of Geraldine Butler.

"I have been out enjoying this delicious evening," she replies.

"And I have been enjoying this delicious music," says the Lady Isola, with a little smile.

"Oh, Geraldine, it is like Heaven to sit and listen to Mr. Woodleigh singing."

And the girl clasps her hands rapturously.

"Where is he?"

Geraldine Butler wishes to know that he is safely out of the way.

"He was sitting talking to me, and then he suddenly said he had to go to Sir Mervyn," replies the girl, wistfully. "I was sorry," she continues, "for he had not quite promised that he would come and see me every day in London."

"Oh, no doubt he will," says Geraldine Butler, feeling the precious minutes are passing, and anxious to get her victim into her toils.

"Do you think so?" and again the lovely face is lighted in wistful entreaty.

"I think it very likely. Suppose you come out and stroll through the shrubbery, and we can talk about it. Will you come?"

The bait took, and the Lady Isola rose with alacrity, saying:

"Oh, how good and kind you are. Yes, I should like to come out with you."

"Put something around your shoulders," says Geraldine Butler, with an affectation of affectionate concern. "Let me ring for something warm to be brought, as the dew is beginning to fall."

Suiting the action to the word, Geraldine Butler rings the bell and orders a shawl to be brought for the Lady Isola.

The latter wraps it round her shoulders, and as she does so, Geraldine Butler thinks it will be an excellent accessory in serving to muffle the Lady Isola's cries, should she make any resistance.

They walk on down by the shrubbery until they come to the path leading through the woodlands.

Dexterously Geraldine Butler engages her in conversation about Clement Woodleigh, so that she does not notice how far away from the house she is taking her.

The Lady Isola innocently confides all her feelings respecting Clement Woodleigh to her wily companion, who answers almost incoherently, for she is beginning to be frightened at her part in the plot.

At length they come to the place indicated by the woman.

There is a slight rustling amongst the trees; in one minute the Lady Isola is seized, and as Geraldine Butler flies towards Petherick Place, the last words she hears the girl cry, are:

"Clement! Clement!"

(To be Continued.)

REMEDY FOR TROUBLE.

WORK is your true remedy. If misfortune hits you hard, you hit something else hard; pitch into something with a will. There's nothing like good, solid, exhausting work to cure trouble. If you have met with losses you don't want to be awake and think about them; you want sleep—calm, sound sleep—and eat your dinner with an appetite. But you can't unless you work. If you say you don't feel like work, and go loafing all day to tell Tom, Dick, and Harry the story of your woes, you'll lie awake and keep your wife awake by your tossing, spoil your temper and your breakfast next morning, and begin to-morrow feeling ten times worse than you do to-day.

There are some troubles that only time can heal, and perhaps some that cannot be healed at all; but all can be helped by the great panacea, work. Try it, you who are afflicted; it is not a patent medicine; it has proved its efficiency since first Adam and Eve left behind them, with weeping, their beautiful Eden. All good physicians in regular standing prescribe it in cases of mental and moral disease. It operates kindly, as well as leaving no disagreeable sequelæ, and we assure you that we have taken a large quantity of it with the most beneficial results.

It will cure more complaints than any nostrum in the materia medica, and comes nearer to being a "cure all" than any drug or compound of drugs in the market. And it will not hurt you if you do not take it sugar-coated.

MOTHER OF PEARL.

TORTOISE-SHELL, the produce of the shield of a species of sea turtle, has long been in favour for the manufacture of ladies' hair combs and the like. The richness of its colour and the beauty of its markings amply account for this. But it is valuable, therefore high-priced, and consequently beyond the reach of many a purse. It is long since imitation combs, made of horn and stained, and presenting a tolerable fair resemblance to the original, were provided to meet the requirements of the fair sex.

We have now to direct attention to another simple method of getting up a "shell." On a piece of glass there is placed a layer of clear gelatine, on which the distinctive markings of the tortoise-shell are obtained by dotting it with a concentrated solution of an aniline colour named "vesuvin," to which a beautiful reddish

tint may be given with "foxin," another aniline colour. The whole may be scattered over the surface, and the drops allowed to run together. The whole when dry receives a coating of glue.

Mother of pearl, which is procured from the shells of large molluscs found in tropical seas, can also be imitated somewhat readily, though the process is more difficult. On a piece of glass place a gelatine layer containing a concentrated solution of some salt, such as white vitriol, epsom salts, etc. When this salt solution has dried and become crystallised, a solution of so-called pearls is spread over the whole. This latter material is derived from the very fine and silver-like "sounds," or air-bladders of fish, which possess considerable iridescence. When the gelatine layer thus treated has dried, a coat of glue is applied, and the article is finished.

THE SURVIVORS;

OR,

John Grindem's Nephew.

CHAPTER I.

The hour was noon. The burning sun of the tropics was shining with unclouded vigour.

In one of the great calm-centres of the Pacific Ocean, midway between the Galapagos Islands and the coast of Central America, lay the dismantled and water-logged hull of a brig of four hundred tons, drifting helplessly at the mercy of the currents.

A stark calm was reigning. The surface of the waters lay motionless and unruffled, looking like a vast mirror. A few gulls were hovering in the vicinity, occasionally rending the air with their discordant screams, and still others were settling down in the distance upon wandering timbers which had evidently come from lost vessels.

This brig, the "Messenger," Captain Wilkins, had sailed from London early in '49 for San Francisco, via Cape Horn. Caught in a sudden and violent tempest in the Pacific Ocean, near the Equator, she had lost her masts and rigging. For more than three months thereafter she had had a succession of dead calms, during which time she had been the sport of the great tropical currents. The pitch in the seams of her deck had been actually melted by the fierce rays of the sun.

The crew and passengers had been put early upon short allowances of food and water, remaining with the wreck in the hope of being picked up by an Australian steamer or other passing vessel. Fevers and other diseases had soon broken out and raged with terrible violence. The wretched occupants of the doomed hull had died like infected sheep.

In due course, all had died, including the commander, with the exception of the few with whom we are now to make acquaintance.

From the cabin of this strange wreck suddenly emerged a solitary man, looking sharply around.

This man was evidently a man of prey. The fact was as plainly announced in his face as is the character of a vulture in its beak.

His under jaw was projected grimly forward, like that of a bull-dog, while his brow retreated like that of a gorilla. His eyes were keen and yet bloodshot; his frame massive and muscular; and his thin lips expressed a firmness allied to ferocity.

He was all animal, and as such endowed with all the qualities of his kind—cunning, daring, selfishness, and every form of brutal instinct necessary for his victories in the great battle of existence.

His whole appearance was that of a robust man in full possession of his health and vigour.

His age could not have exceeded five-and-thirty years.

The swift glances of this man took in the whole situation around him in an instant.

"No sail!" he muttered. "No sign of a breeze! It does seem as if the calm would last for ever! I'm getting tired!"

He heaved a profound sigh, still scanning the glassy surface of the waters.

"And yet I ought not to be impatient," he added. "Every day, every hour, sees a change in my favour. From a hundred and thirty-seven we are reduced to half a dozen. And these few are rapidly going. Ah!"

A slight sound behind him caused him to turn his gaze in that direction. Clinging to the sides of the companion-way, an old man had thrust up his head and shoulders into view.

The new-comer looked like death incarnate. His face was ghastly white, and his wild eyes were so deeply sunken in their dark sockets as to seem to peer out from caverns. It was easy to see that he was in the last stage of starvation.

"Mr. Baker," he announced, in a gasping voice, "Elkins is dead!"

"Is that so?" returned the well-fed and robust occupant of the deck, without the least emotion. "Then there are indeed only six of us left! You had better throw the body overboard!"

Nodding assent, the grim spectre of a man withdrew into the cabin. Sounds of a stir arose. A few moments later three gaunt and ghostly forms staggered slowly forth, bearing in their midst a silent figure even more lank and spectral than themselves.

A bag of old iron had been attached to the feet of the corpse. A few steps, a plunge, and all was over.

The dead man went down like lead, escaping the jaws of half a dozen huge sharks whose tails suddenly flashed in the sunlight as they darted in vain pursuit of him.

The exertion of bringing forth the corpse had been too much for the three living skeletons. They sank half fainting to the deck, one of them snivelling audibly, as if breaking in mind as well as in bodily force.

"We are nearing the end, it seems," said Baker to himself, as he coldly scanned the deathlike features of his companions. "A few hours more will make an end of them! And I—I shall remain master of the situation!"

A wild light leaped to his eyes. An awful exultation filled his voice.

It would have been a strange sight—as strange as significant—to compare the burly form and ruddy cheeks of this man with the thin frames and cadaverous faces of his companions. How had he fared so well, while they had so nearly perished of starvation?

"Well, boys, we're in as bad a box as ever," said Baker aloud, changing his position, so as not to breathe the foul air surrounding the unfortunates. "No wind is promised us—no sign of a sail!"

"No, we must die if we stay here," responded hollowly one of the men, whose name was Crossley. "We are nearly out of provisions and water, and are dying by inches! It is high time for a change!"

"Well, what do you propose to do?" asked Baker, as coldly as ever.

"We'd like to go away in the boat," answered Crossley, "and make an effort to reach the coast or some island, or to get out of these calms into some route where we shall stand a chance of meeting a ship!"

"Indeed? Is this your idea, too, Shutter?"

The sailor addressed responded affirmatively. "And yours, too, Weedon?" pursued Baker, in the same cold and hard voice as before.

Weedon nodded feebly. He was too weak to speak.

"You are all agreed, it seems," commented Baker, with a calm smile, "and I must say that your idea is a good one."

"If you will kindly allow us to take the boat, Mr. Baker?" murmured Crossley.

"And also our shares of the remaining water and biscuit," supplemented Shutter.

"Oh, I am perfectly willing to accede to these points," declared Baker, as he placed himself under a rude awning attached to the stump of the principal mast. "In fact, you may have all the provisions left us, as well as the boat. I shall be able, no doubt, to catch a little rain from time to time in the future as in the past, and to also secure occasionally a stray fish or bird sufficient to keep the breath of life in me."

"Oh, may we have all—all?" cried Shutter, wildly, looking incredulous.

"Yes, you may," was the answer.

"No, we must not be so selfish," said Weedon. "If we take everything, what is to become of the old man below?"

"He?" sneered Baker. "You needn't think of him! He's dying!"

"Well, then, his daughter——"

"Oh, I'll look out for her," interrupted Baker. "Have I not long been in the habit of sharing my rations with the girl and her father?"

"That is so," said Shutter. "You have indeed been very kind to them. We will take you at your offer—if indeed you will really be so good as to stand by it!"

"Rest assured that I am perfectly serious, my friends," assured Baker, "and to prove the fact, I will assist you in getting the boat ready—if indeed you are anxious to take your departure!"

He looked inquiringly from one to another.

"Oh, we must go," said Crossley. "It is now a hundred days since we lost our masts and became the prey of the eternal calms. There is barely a hope for us, if we take to the boat, but none at all if we remain. Perhaps a breeze will soon spring up, and in that case we will stand a chance of reaching the nearest island!"

"It is agreed that you will go, then?" questioned Baker, as he again swiftly scanned the faces of the three men. "You make yourselves as comfortable as possible under the awning here, while I proceed to get your boat ready!"

The task thus entered upon was not a long one.

The boat in question was towing astern, and by due care, including a thorough wetting every hour, had been kept seaworthy, notwithstanding the intensity of the rays so long beating upon it.

Within five minutes Baker had brought out of the cabin all the visible supplies of the ill-fated men, and had stepped the mast of the boat and set the sail.

"All ready," he then announced. "I have given you all the water and provisions. I have raised the sail to afford you protection from the sun. You had better not say good-bye to the girl or her father; you would only distress them!"

The three living skeletons gathered themselves up slowly and took their way to the boat.

"It is so kind of you, Mr. Baker," said Shutter, feelingly. "If we encounter a ship in time, we will come to your rescue. In any case, rest assured——"

The man suddenly paused. Clinging to the low and broken taffrail, he gazed far away upon the surface of the ocean, with eyes that seemed spell-bound.

"What do I see?" he gasped. "Is not that the ruffle of a breeze?"

"No," assured Weedon. "It's the back of a whale, or the fin of a shark."

"By heavens! a puff of wind, sure enough," exclaimed Baker, his voice breaking out sonorously from its previous calmness. "A breeze, as I live. Its track deepens and widens. It's coming straight for us!"

The fact was attested by the wild and yet feeble murmurs of his companions.

The calms of a hundred days were at an end. A breeze was at hand.

"You are taking to the boat at just the right time, boys," resumed Baker, after watching a

few moments the rising ripples in the distance. "Our luck has turned at last. Good fortune be with you."

He continued to talk in this strain until the eager and excited men had pushed off from the wreck.

They were still within hailing distance when the first puffs of the advancing breeze struck them.

For a few moments they were almost beside themselves, as they had laid their course in the direction they had resolved to steer. Their voices broke out in loud thanksgiving.

"Good luck go with you, boys," shouted Baker, waving his hand gaily.

"You are sure you do not wish to come with us?" called Shutter.

Baker shook his head.

"But you remember that we are taking away the last boat, don't you?" persisted the seaman, thoughtfully.

"That's all right," assured Baker. "You are welcome to the boat. I've ideas about helping myself in some other fashion. By-bye, all."

And with this he turned away and resumed his seat under the awning.

"So, I'm rid of them," he ejaculated, with grim satisfaction. "It's another point gained."

He relapses into a silence—a silence that was as sinister as thoughtful.

An hour passed as in a dream, during which time the breeze which had appeared so unexpectedly continued to freshen.

At the end of this time Baker thought of his companions.

Arising he looked after them. Their boat had become a mere speck upon the distant waters.

"Good," he commented. "They're out of my way. I can now proceed to business."

Reaching over the taffrail, he seized a rope which seemed to be trailing carelessly in the water, secured to one of the broken timbers of the stern, and began hauling it in hand over hand.

He had thus pulled in about ten fathoms of rope, when the bow of a boat came into view, and in a few moments thereafter a sound boat was lying alongside, although full of water. Securing the boat to the broken bulwarks, Baker hastened to bail the water out of it.

He had nearly completed the task when an exclamation of amazement startled him. Looking up quickly, his eyes encountered a face and form of surpassing loveliness—the face and form of the "girl" whom mention has been made, and who had just come out of the cabin.

"Why is not that the boat that was lost, Mr. Baker?" asked the new-comer.

"It is the boat that was supposed to be lost, Miss Prescott," replied Baker, smilingly. "For four weeks past it has been suspended under our keel, partly to keep it out of the sun, and partly to have it at hand when needed."

"Crossley and the rest have left us, I see?" breathed the girl, as her eyes followed the distant speck on the water.

"Yes. They thought best to take that course, and I really had no objections."

"And we are alone."

A visible shudder passed over the girl's form, as this comment escaped her.

"Well, it's a good loneliness, as the Ingen said when his squaw died," said Barker, laughing. "There'll be fewer to eat and drink, and our supplies will last longer."

"Our supplies?" breathed the girl. "I gathered from the few words that reached my ears, that you gave them everything."

"So I did—everything that they knew anything about," explained Baker, "but not my own secret stores. See here."

He indicated a number of boxes secured in the midst of the boat.

"You see," he resumed, "I was cunning enough to look out in time for number one! Here are canned meats and vegetables enough to last us for three months to come, especially if eaten with some cans of biscuit I had hidden

between the brig's timbers. I foresaw, you see, at an early day, that an evil hour was sure to dawn upon us, and took my measures accordingly."

"And this is the secret of your robust health, is it, Mr. Baker?" asked Miss Prescott. "And this is also the source of the supplies you have so often given me for father and for myself?"

"Exactly. It's selfish, and all that, of course, but—it's natural."

He climbed out of the boat, gaining the deck, and advanced nearer to his companion, bending a strangely admiring gaze upon her.

She was scarcely more than a girl in years, as has been indicated by the remarks of those around her; but the long agony of the hundred days preceding had developed her abruptly into a woman.

She had not only been ill several weeks, but had suffered for want of the necessities of life; and the traces of these severe afflictions were now visible in her form and upon her features.

But all these drawbacks could not seriously mar the glorious loveliness by which she was distinguished, or entirely subdue the natural elasticity of her spirits.

"How is your father now?" asked Baker.

"Very low indeed—feebler than ever," was the answer. "But he insisted that I should leave him for a few moments, and come on deck for a breath of fresh air. I fear—I know—"

She broke down abruptly, giving way to a flood of tears that were terrible to witness.

"I fear the worst for him," said Baker, advancing yet a step nearer to the weeping girl, and endeavouring to endow his hard voice with a tone of emotion. "There is still a single chance to save him—the chance I have so often demanded—and I will undertake to convey you and your father from this wreck to the coast of Peru and to safety!"

He stood hoveringly over the shrinking girl, looking down into her anguished eyes and face, and actually suspending his respiration in the eagerness with which he awaited her reply to his proposal.

It was a contrast of hawk and dove that they presented at that moment—a contrast of angel and demon.

CHAPTER II.

JOHN GRINDEN, merchant, sat alone in his counting-house, in London, busy with his books.

There was a scowl on his retreating forehead as he balanced profit and loss, and discovered that the former was less and the latter greater than he had expected.

His was not a pleasing visage. It was close-shaven, pinched in every feature, and its expression was habitually suspicious, snarling and fault-finding.

He was a hard man, keen to overreach those with whom he had to deal, quick to cut down the wages of employees, or deduct five minutes' tardiness in the morning, ready to oppress the widow or the orphan, and shrinking from no means of adding to his wealth, so that he kept out of the meshes of the law.

His warehouse, large, and filled with valuable goods, was situated in Cannon Street, and took high place in the second rank of London dry goods warehouses.

Upon his shelves were costly silks, shawls from India, crapes from China, linens from Ireland—all the choice fabrics that are gathered in such repositories.

Attentive shopmen and shopwomen waited behind his counters.

Ladies and gentlemen thronged before them, coming and going, and all contributing their share to swell his fortune.

Cash boys ran up and down the aisles. A grave bookkeeper sat at his desk in his little office.

The merchant was pleasantly conscious of all these things while he figured and pondered

upon business calculations in his private room.

Presently his brow elevated.

"I am five thousand better off than I thought," he said to himself. "Those damaged silks sold as good ones, thanks to my acuteness. Those mixed goods which I sold to country merchants as all linen, paid well, and no one ever discovered the fraud. I have ten thousand to invest in real estate. I think I'll buy that house my wife has set her heart upon."

His thin lips closed themselves in an unpleasant smile.

"Everything prospers with me," he mused. "I'm like Midas—all things turn to gold in my hands."

A knock was heard upon the door, and a clerk, tall and thin, with a half-starved look, entered.

"If you please, Mr. Grinden," he said, deprecatingly, "there's a lad wishes to see you—"

The merchant regarded his dependant with a furious anger that caused the latter to pause in his speech and involuntarily take a step in retreat.

"How dare you come to me with messages from beggars?" he demanded. "The second offence will cost you your place. If you had been longer in my service, sir, you would know that I never see beggars."

He waved his hand, but the clerk stood his ground.

"This is not a beggar, sir. It's your own nephew—"

"I have no nephew. It's an impostor. Call the police."

The clerk withdrew, but the door had scarcely closed when it opened again and he reappeared with an agitated face.

Before he could speak the aperture widened and a second person entered the counting-house.

This person was the one in question—the "nephew" whom the merchant had just repudiated.

He was a boy of fifteen, with a fair, frank face, honest blue eyes, and a straightforward look; a brave and noble lad, fearless, truthful, and good, with a winning address and gentle manner.

He approached Mr. Grinden, extending his hand.

"Are you my Uncle John?" he asked. "I am Albert Graham, your sister's only son—"

The clerk withdrew.

"Albert Graham," echoed the merchant. "My sister Mary's son."

"Yes, uncle," responded Albert.

The merchant shook the outstretched hand feebly, and invited the youth to be seated.

"This is a surprise," he said. "What brings you here? Come on a little visit, eh? Better have stayed in the country."

"I am come to stay, Uncle John," said the lad, quietly. "I am alone in the world—"

"Alone? How's that?"

"My father died last year, as mother wrote to you. My mother has followed him," and the lad's voice choked. "She died last week, Uncle John. And when she was dying she told me to come to you. She sent you her dearest love—"

"Humph!" said Mr. Grinden. "Of course, I'm sorry she's dead, but it's years since I saw her, and the loss doesn't come on me as keenly as on you. Mary was a good woman, a little sentimental, perhaps, and thinking always about affection, and that sort of thing, but she meant well, I don't doubt. What a singular Providence that your parents should die so near together!"

"A merciful Providence, Uncle John, for mother could not live without father," said the lad, gravely. "They were bound up in each other."

"Humph!" again remarked Mr. Grinden, regarding his nephew speculatively. "How many children did your parents leave?"

"I was their only child, Uncle John."

"Ah, yes. I have lost sight of my sister during the past few years," said the merchant. "It is true that I received her letter that her husband was dead, but I never found time to answer it. My business cares are heavy. I visited your parents ten years ago, when you were a small shaver. They were very prosperous then—owned a grocery, a house, horses, and so forth. Your father had few expenses in that little town. I suppose, Albert, that you have inherited a handsome property?"

"Quite the contrary, sir. My father made some investments that turned out badly, and he failed in business only three months before he died."

"Ah, failed in business, did he?" said Mr. Grindem, cheerfully, shaking his head in a reproving sort of way. "That's bad! It's common, however, and people will do it. It gives a man a bad reputation, though, and folks will talk. I knew that your father was a keen business man, but I didn't really give him credit for so much shrewdness. Was it a bad failure?"

"It swamped us completely, sir—left us in poverty!"

Mr. Grindem stared, amazed.

"What! Eh?" he gasped. "Poverty?"

"When the debts were all paid we had no home, and only one hundred pounds in the world!"

"The debts paid?"

"Yes, sir. Every debt was paid. My father was taken ill, lingered three months, and then died; but when he died he owed no man one single halfpenny," said the boy, proudly. "No one whomsoever can say that my father ever cheated her or him of their rightful dues!"

"But, bless my soul!" ejaculated Mr. Grindem.

"Was the man mad?"

Albert looked surprised.

"My father was an honest man, sir, that was all."

"And your mother was left in poverty?"

"Yes, sir, but it was an honourable poverty. She had a little money left after father died. We hired two rooms and I got work to do. I had received a good education at the village academy—I mean good for my years," said the lad, modestly—"and I became a clerk in the village bookseller's. I managed to provide for mother while she lived. After her burial, I had only four pounds left in the world."

"A beggar!" muttered Mr. Grindem. "A regular beggar!"

Albert failed to catch the comment.

"The bookseller had no further need of my services, being about to take his son into partnership with him. And mother, when dying, told me to come to you, Uncle John—"

"Very convenient for you, no doubt. But I have got a large and expensive family of my own," said Mr. Grindem. "Poor people have a singular fondness for saddling their offspring upon people with money. I don't see that I can do anything for you. It's absurd for a boy of your size and education to think of settling himself as a pauper relation on me. It can't be done, young man! I've a large family."

The lad's face flushed hotly.

"You are mistaken, sir," he said, with a dignity beyond his years. "I want to pay my way. I want to work. I came to ask a situation as a clerk in your office."

"If I took in every boy that wanted to be a clerk," said the merchant, testily, "I should be driven to the almshouse through paying salaries. There's no vacancy in my establishment. The clerks I have know my ways, and I ain't going to turn men off even for you."

The boy's face looked blank.

"Do you refuse to receive me in your service, Uncle John?" he asked. "I do not want any favour, only a chance to earn my living. I will work just as the others do, and receive the same pay."

"You are very condescending," sneered the merchant. "But the long and the short of the matter is, I have no place for you."

"No place for me in your house? No place for me in your warehouse?"

"You seem to understand me. I have no place anywhere for you."

The boy's blank countenance expressed plainly his surprise, indignation and wounded feeling.

"Do you refuse to interest yourself in any way in me, Uncle John?" he inquired.

"I don't see that I can do anything for you."

It was your father's place to provide for you—not my place. I do not wish to comment upon your father's folly in failing in business and neglecting to provide for his family. The man who neglects his family is worse than an infidel. But that he could expect me to repair his neglect is incredible!"

The lad rose up.

"We shall not agree, Uncle John, in regard to my father's course," he said. "He left his name to me spotless and honourable, a heritage a thousand times more noble than a million of pounds! I would not exchange my inheritance for all your wealth, sir."

"You are impertinent."

"I have brought to you my mother's message. I have obeyed her command, and asked of you work and protection. I am all alone in the world, Uncle John—friendless—and only a boy of fifteen. If you turn me away, I have nowhere to go. I have but two pounds in the world—"

"Many a man has begun life on a less sum than that. I cannot help you. You must help yourself. You ought to have too much pride to thrust yourself upon me, a pauper to be cared for—"

"Stop there, Uncle John. I am no pauper. I asked for work, not for alms," and the boy's eyes flashed fire, and his pale, young face grew strangely stern. "You send me away as if I were an importunate beggar. You revile my parents; you taunt me. You have said enough. I am going to relieve you of my presence."

He moved to the door and grasped the handle.

"But before I go," he added, "let me say a word further. We shall meet again, Uncle John. I am a boy now, poor and weak. Some day, you and I may change places. Some day, I believe so surely as there is a Heaven, I shall be rich and powerful. And then you and I will meet again!"

He bowed and withdrew, gaining the street, where he mingled with the throng.

Rejected by his kinsman, a stranger in a strange city, what was he to do, where was he to go?

He wandered on desolately, the world all before him, the destiny of his whole future life in his boyish hands.

(To be Continued.)

A MALAY WOMAN.

WHITE, or light yellow, and interwoven sometimes with flower patterns, more generally with brilliant stripes of Chinese silk, red, yellow, green, or blue, the "baro," or blouse, is an essentially national dress, though in the neighbourhood of Manila modified too often into an uncouth resemblance of a European skirt. Beneath it a pair of white or light-coloured trousers are belted round the waist; the feet, usually bare, or protected by sandals at most, are on occasions like this not seldom incased in patent-leather boots of Spanish fashion; the head is protected by the "salacot," a round, mushroom-like hat, of about a foot in diameter, close plaited in grey and black intersecting patterns of tough "nito" or liana fibre; the circumference tastefully ornamented with silver bands and flowerets, an excellent and picturesque sunshade, ill exchanged, though happily but seldom, for the European hat of silk or straw.

The poorer classes wear a like dress, but of coarser materials, in which red or orange commonly predominate, and on the head a "salacot" devoid of ornament. But while the men's attire, though national in the main, shows

occasional tokens of European influence, the women, with wise conservatism, retain their graceful Malay costume unaltered as of old. Wrapped in the many-coloured folds of the siltken "saya," or "sarong," and over it a second, but narrower, waistcloth, also of silk, reaching down to the knees, and dark in hue; her breast and shoulders covered with delicate "pina" texture, while the matchless abundance of her raven hair ripples from under a white snooded kerchief far down her back, not seldom to her very heels, a Malay woman could hardly, even did she wish it, improve on the toilette bequeathed by her ancestors. Silver or gold ornaments are not much in feminine use.

It is true that the Malay type of face is generally too flat for regular beauty, and the eye, though larger than the Chinese, is seldom full-sized; but many of the younger women are decidedly pretty, a few lovely, and a habitual look of smiling good-nature goes far to render pleasing the less nature-favoured faces. Their complexion is a clear brown, sometimes hardly darker than that of an ordinary South European brunette. Children, absolutely naked, or with a light and scanty shirt for sole covering, mix fearlessly but quietly in the throng; early trained by precept and example to good manners, they show less disposition to noise and mischief than is ordinary elsewhere at their age.

A CHAMPION OF WOMAN'S RIGHTS.

BETSY MUSTARD is a champion of woman's rights in Edinburgh and is determined that the legal profession, if she has to go to law, shall not have the oyster and leave her the shell. She has a case against the Royal Bank, and when the hearing came on in the Court of Session she pleaded in person. She was dressed in a curious garb, which is described as "a 'cross' between an advocate's gown and a judge's robe," and wore a white hat, evidently designed to represent a wig. Betsy delivered a speech of two hours' duration, which is said to have been "not so racy as usual."

On resuming her seat the Court gave judgment against her. She then turned round to the crowded court, and with feminine gracefulness of expression asked if they "had ever seen a greater swindle in all their born days."

ANCIENT AND MODERN EYESIGHT.

A CURIOUS controversy has lately sprung up in Germany as to whether the eye in the human race has always possessed the same delicacy as at present and whether men at all epochs have perceived colours as we now distinguish them. Dr. Magnus, an oculist, asserts that primitive man had only a confused notion of tints, and even did not recognise them all. Thus, the ancients only saw three colours in the prism, instead of the seven which exist, and the sagas of the North only speak of three in the rainbow. The most luminous in the spectrum—those which act with most intensity on the retina—are red, orange, and yellow; blue, indigo and violet only make a feeble impression; green occupies an intermediate rank. Well, throughout the records of antiquity only the red and yellow, so to say, are spoken of.

According to Pliny, painters only employed those two colours, with black and white to produce their finest effects. The most valued tissues were dyed solely in red and yellow. The knowledge of green does not exist either in Sanskrit literature or Homer, who, in describing the verdure of the country, uses epithets relating to other colours. A savant, M. Geiger, asserts that he has proved that neither in the poems of the Rig-Veda nor the Avesta, the Bible, the verses of Homer, the Koran, or the ancient literature of Finland or Scandinavia, is any mention of blue to be found. In fact, no word is to be traced in any of them that designates

that colour. Therefore some people must have existed for whom verdure was not green nor the skies blue.

Even at this day, the inhabitants of Birmah have great difficulty in making a distinction between blue and green. Mr. Gladstone, whose knowledge of Greek is well known, is wholly of the opinion of Dr. Magnus. We have no occasion to say that these views are strongly contested.

THE FAIR STRANGER.

"HANDSOME? Yes—rather."

My cousin Minnie was critical. Minnie was my guest, and I was running myself off my feet in her service. We had been through the Post Office.

My beauty was a clerk there; she was standing now, holding out at arm's length a drawing she had just completed.

She looked like a Juno.

I longed to sketch her head.

I was an artist myself in a small way. I was so struck by her attitude and carriage that I could not resist saying a word to her. I rather flattered myself that a propensity of mine to make acquaintances hastily was due to my semi-artistic temperament.

"How nicely you have done it!" I said.

"It is nothing but mechanical drawing. It requires practice—that is all."

"You must get very tired of it. I draw, myself, a little. I should get awfully tired of doing machine work all the time."

"It is my living. I would as soon make one kind of lines as another. Of course if free-hand drawing paid better, I'd rather do that. Otherwise I don't care."

"Then you do draw—I mean something more than this?"

"Yes; everyone does in these days. I've never taken to painting jugs, however. That is monopolised by the amateurs; therefore it doesn't pay. Every producer is his own consumer."

I laughed.

I daubed crockery jugs myself; evidently, from the tones of her voice, my beauty despised them.

Meanwhile, Walter, who had been poking about among the cases in his near-sighted way, approached, also in his near-sighted way, and asked Minnie if she were ready to go. I could not hear Minnie's reply, as she dropped her voice.

I was talking to the fair stranger at the time; but you know how it is that one can carry on one conversation and overhear another simultaneously.

I also saw Walter's look of interest, and that he took a step or two towards where I stood.

He hesitated; then he came forward.

"Miss Ryan, I think?" bowing to my Juno.

"Yes. You are Mr. Loring, whom I met last summer?"

"I am glad you remember me."

"Oh, I rarely forget faces, especially those I have pleasant associations with. We had very good times together."

"By-the-bye, Laura, you know Miss Ryan?"

"Only because you called her name just now. I shall be very happy to know her, however, dating from this."

"Miss Ryan, this is my sister, Mrs. Wood. Perhaps you may remember my having mentioned her to you."

My Juno smiled upon me cordially. She was charming now.

Then I introduced Minnie.

Minnie looked very meek and quiet beside Miss Ryan, who was dressed in all the recent eccentricities of fashion; a great deal of very golden-frizzed hair; very long and very tight skirts; innumerable jangling bangles on each arm.

Still she was very handsome.

Walter evidently thought so.

He stood staring at her, with a pensive half-smile.

Walter always was silly where pretty women were concerned. I finally proposed an adjournment.

"We are taking up Miss Ryan's valuable time," I urged.

"Not mine, the Government's," she returned. "However, as it happens, I have no more work on hand. And I so seldom exchange a word with a soul from morning till evening."

"Don't you know anyone here?" I asked, as we all strolled towards the door.

"Oh dear, no. Not in a social way," and Miss Ryan tossed her head.

"That last was in very bad taste," commented Minnie on our way downstairs. "There are some things that should be understood, but not expressed."

"Who is she?" I inquired of Walter.

"A very beautiful girl," he responded, promptly.

"So Beauty, like talent, is above the necessity of antecedents."

"She has antecedents. Rather too many of them. Her grandfather is old Bribein, the railroad man. He was worth millions last year. Now he is hardly worth enough to support himself, and not enough to support this girl, who is all he has in this world. When he failed he came on to London and persuaded some of the men he used to pay for doing his work to give her this office. I met her last summer at Mrs. Van Deer's. She knows respectable people, you see. In the midst of her visit, old Bribein telegraphed to her that he had secured this office for her, and that she must come on and take it. So she left me, and another man or two, disconsolate."

"And you forgot all about her in the meanwhile?"

"Truth to tell, I did. You ladies are all so charming. Cousin Minnie has been the especial syren for the last fortnight."

Minnie was a quiet little thing who translated books for her living.

She laughed now.

"My dear Walter, my conscience acquits me of any fascinating arts, intentional or unpremeditated. But I must confess I am not surprised Miss Ryan did not make a more lasting impression. She is decidedly loud. I hate that accentuated style of dress—an exaggeration of every worst point of the prevailing fashion."

"It is surprising how severe little women like you can be."

"Jealousy, perhaps?" laughed Minnie.

"Yes—far as you would be from acknowledging this to be the case. It's natural enough that an exceptionally handsome woman like Aletta Ryan should create distrust in her own sex."

"You give her own sex credit for very little generosity of feeling."

"That has never been considered their strong point."

"Oh, Walter, Walter!" I exclaimed. "You deserve to be awfully taken in by some designing woman one of these days, who will be as bad in fact as are the rest of the sex in your fond imagination."

"Yes, I suppose I shall be taken in," assented Walter. "I am an inexperienced youth. There's not a more inexperienced and artless fellow walks the streets to-day than I am."

"We will trust that you will not fall into Miss Ryan's clutches," I said. "If you are artless and inexperienced, she emphatically is not." I had recovered from my sudden fit of admiration. I entirely agreed with every word Minnie said. I was awfully sorry I had been instrumental in the renewal of acquaintance between Miss Ryan and my brother. Would I never learn to be discreet and conventional, and to cease making strange acquaintances? "She is tremendously handsome, however," I added, determined that Walter should not accuse me of any mean jealousy.

"Good gracious!"

Walter actually took off his glasses, to take a good, unprejudiced look at me.

"You don't even pretend to be of the same mind more than two minutes at a time, do you?"

Ten minutes ago you were actually hanging upon Miss Ryan's words. Now words fail to express your contempt for her."

"Oh, well, don't let us talk about her," I said. "I don't suppose we shall ever lay eyes on her again."

"I'm not so sure of that," said Walter. "I, for one mean to make an effort to see her."

We went everywhere at that time. I wanted Minnie to see things—but, pshaw! why not admit at once that I loved society and gaiety dearly myself?

I was only too glad of the excuse for going out night after night. My husband groaned and expostulated, but I always had my way in the end.

I told him it was good for him to go about and mix with people.

He would settle down into a stupid old fellow before he knew it, if it were not for my determination that he should not. So he and I, and Walter and Minnie, went to ball and reception, and reception and ball.

"I wonder we don't meet Miss Ryan at some of these places," Walter said to me one night. I had been dancing, and my partner and I had stopped to take breath.

"Does she know anybody?"

"Oh, everybody knows everybody else in this part of the town. General Bribein knew lots of people. Hallo!"

There was quite an excitement near the door.

Everyone was staring at a sleek old gentleman who entered at this juncture with a superbly beautiful, tall girl on his arm.

"Talk of angels," Walter said. "By Jove, isn't she stunning?"

She wore a rich white silk dress, very trailing, very tightly drawn back.

Her golden hair was bound with golden bands; she wore heavy gold bands on her arms, and a gold band at her throat. She was all white and gold and gleaming.

I went off to finish my dance.

I had occasion to pass Miss Ryan, and she smiled very graciously upon me. I noticed that Walter hovered around her during all the rest of the evening. Later on Mrs. Belesprit came up to me.

"Ah, my dear Mrs. Wood! Is your cousin with you to-night? Sweet little thing. Her translations are really admirable, are they not? And how quiet and unassuming she is! I hope I shall see you both to-morrow night. Don't disappoint me. By the way, I can promise you a treat. Miss Ryan has promised to give us a recitation. She is really a genius. That tall girl in white with gold ornaments. A little theatrical in her style—eh?"

"It may be. A recitation? Thank you. I think you may depend upon seeing us."

My husband came up, yawning. "Ready to go, Lollie? I'm half asleep."

"Yes, I'm ready to go, you poor, put-upon soul. Minnie, we're going. Sam, will you look up Walter, while Minnie and I put on our wraps?" Then, to Minnie, "Miss Ryan has turned up, you see. And she is announced as the grand attraction at Mr. Belesprit's Literary Reunion to-morrow night."

"Literary Reunion! I loathe the Literary Reunions! Every one sits round, resolved into a point of admiration. Must we go?"

"We must. I promised. Besides, Mrs. Belesprit thinks that you are such a sweet little thing, and translate so well, or words to that effect. It is your Christian duty to respond. You are a writing person; she likes to entertain all the writing people."

"It will be fun to hear Miss Ryan."

"Of course it will be Romeo and Juliet?"

"Oh, of course."

It was.

We were late, and Miss Ryan swept into Mrs. Belesprit's handsome parlour immediately upon our arrival.

She spoke her piece correctly. Her voice was bad.

Some of the words came altogether too much through her teeth.

But she was graceful and beautiful, and she



[THE BELLE.]

had caught a number of tricks from actresses she had seen on the stage, which she rehearsed with confidence.

When it was over people criticised in the usual vein.

"The world has many echoes, but few voices," Minnie said to me, under cover of the buzz.

"Who originated that remark, Minnie? It is good."

"Goethe would be flattered by your commendation."

"Oh, Goethe! of course it's good, then. You dear little thing! I wish you would get up and recite. That would be worth listening to. Look at Miss Ryan shaking her head at Walter. He is as pleased as a baby with a rattle. People all seem to be going up to Miss Ryan and congratulating her. Do you suppose that is the next in order before the house? I can't tell her I liked it."

"We can say we were interested."

"That would be a prevarication. Still, we can thank her without committing ourselves farther. I'm afraid she will think I am opposing myself to Walter's admiration if I do not say anything."

So I crossed the room presently, and smiled and thanked her.

I am aware that I have a deceitful little smile, for which I am sometimes sorry, but not always.

Miss Ryan responded most graciously. We stood alone for a minute or two. "I am so glad

to see you again. I liked you so much that day at the Post Office."

Walter here said:

"Laura, have you looked over Miss Ryan's drawings?"

"No. Where?"

"On the table in the library. I think I can promise you a treat."

"What doesn't she do?" I asked, on our way to the library.

"She is full of talent; and all in such a careless, off-hand, indifferent way. That is the charm of it."

"Do you think so? Now I, on the contrary, have a notion that artistic earnestness brings with it artistic finish."

"Oh, well, a woman may be earnest, and yet not flaunt her earnestness in one's face."

"Flaunts her curls instead. Are these the drawings?" I exclaimed. Illustrations of old Mother Goose. Funny, aren't they? And well done, too. Execution fair to middling. But they remind me somewhat of things I have seen before."

This I said in the vein of Miss Ryan's dramatic critics.

"I'm sorry I showed them to you. You could not possibly be just."

Other people came up.

"Very good. Clever girl. General Bribem's daughter, did you say? Ah—granddaughter. For sale? How much? Five pounds for the set. Enough, isn't it?"

"Why don't you buy them, Laura?" Walter suggested, mellifluously.

"Because when I perform an act of charity I like to be sure of my object."

"You would certainly have your money's worth."

"I don't agree with you. Why don't you buy them?"

"Oh, I'm hard up, as usual. Besides, it would look—"

"As though it were not art, but the artist?" I interrupted.

"Something of the kind."

Presently I put a very direct question to my hostess.

"Does Miss Ryan intend to go on the stage?" I asked.

"I think it is quite probable. She would certainly make a success."

Several persons standing by chimed in with this verdict.

I smiled my deceitful little smile.

A day or two after that Walter brought me the pasteboard case that held Miss Ryan's drawings.

"Here's a present for you, my dear."

"Oh," I said, adding:

"Thank you."

"Suppose you keep them on one of these tables, where people can see them."

"Am I to understand that I am being used as an advertising medium?"

"Really a most ladylike speech."

"Well, I don't care. Put them where you please; but don't call them mine. I don't desire to be a patroness of bogus art."

Of course I unbosomed to Minnie.

"It is so blind in Walter to be taken in by such a sham. Sham acting, sham drawing. And Walter is so clever and so accomplished himself. Why, he could dash off sketches ten times better than those, any day he chose."

"Walter has every talent but the talent of application."

"I suppose he would do a great deal better if there were any real necessity for it. But as it has been, a very little effort has kept his head above water. This thing of waiting for dead men's shoes is a very degrading business. When his Uncle Harry dies, he will leave him his fortune, no doubt; and I can't help feeling that Walter always looks forward more or less to that."

"I don't think he will ever marry, unless he marries a rich girl, until someone or other does leave him a fortune; so you may be easy on that score. A man of his taste is too pleasure-loving to sacrifice his ease even for love. He won't fall desperately in love with Miss Ryan, however much he may admire her."

"All the same, I hate him to be duped."

"What difference does it make? I daresay he knows he is duped. That is, he holds his judgment in suspense; he makes up his mind not to be hypercritical."

Minnie went away, and I pursued my life without her, missing her dreadfully. I had had many a secret wish that Walter and Minnie would take a fancy to each other.

One evening Walter lounged in and nipped in the bud whatever hopes I may have cherished in regard to Minnie and himself.

"I met such a pleasant woman to-day," he said; "a cousin of the Greens. I think you would like her. Sensible person. Middle-aged maiden lady, like Minnie, you know."

"Good gracious, Walter! Minnie is not a middle-aged maiden lady. What are you thinking of?"

"I don't know what you'd call her if she's not. Any way, Miss Jones is. By-the-way, have you been to call on Miss Ryan yet?"

"No, I haven't."

"I wish you would call."

"Why?"

"Because the girl is lonely and needs friends. And because I know her and go there, and it would make things pleasanter for me."

Walter had taken off his glasses, and was frowning slightly over a paper-knife he was balancing on one slender finger.

Dear old fellow, how I loved his handsome, refined face.
Still I had my misgivings; he was so solemn about this.

"Walter, my dear boy—"

"Lollie, don't be silly. I can't afford to be, I assure you. I don't ask you to go to see Miss Ryan and bid her welcome to the family; I can't afford to marry, and I don't mean to. But I would like you to be kind and good to her."

"I'll go to see her."

"There's a darling. She has taken such a fancy to you."

I timed my visit so that I found Miss Ryan at home. I was sure she was sincerely pleased to see me. I was not at my ease with Miss Ryan. I could not strike the sympathetic chord. She talked a good deal, but in a jerky, flighty way, that had something unreal about it.

She talked a good deal about herself; her distasteful, hard-working life; her lovers; she dwelt a great deal upon her lovers. She showed me a bangle one man had given her; told me of a bouquet another had sent her.

"It is a pity there are so many," I said. "You can't marry them all."

"Marry them! My dear Mrs. Wood, that is not on the cards at all. I don't think I would marry any one of these men, and I'm sure not one of them dreams of marrying me. You see, I am poor; and they are all poor, or fancy they are. I am not a girl to make a poor man's wife."

"It would depend upon how much you loved him," I ventured.

"No, it wouldn't. Love doesn't last through the honeymoon, at any rate. Life is a very prosaic affair, as far as I can see."

It would have been both preposterous and disagreeable to argue with her.

"I hope you will come to see me," I said, on leaving.

"It is a charity to ask me. I so rarely see the inside of a house I like."

"You might not like mine."

"Oh, yes, I should. I take strong, violent fancies. I liked you enormously from the first moment I laid eyes on you."

"Suppose you come to see me in the evening. Come before dark; the twilights are so long now. I will see that you get home safely."

So I left her. She fascinated me in spite of myself.

When I told Walter, he looked pleased.

"That's what I call a charitable action, Lollie," he said.

"My dear," I responded, "it was not charity. I wanted her. She attracted me this afternoon. She is superbly handsome; and as I was only a woman, she did not consider it necessary to practise off on me any of her stage tricks. Really that is what I dislike about the girl. I dislike artificiality. She is always imitating some actress, and a second-rate actress at that."

"It strikes me, on the contrary, that she is a type, and that the second-rate actresses may hold the mirror up to her, and girls like her."

Miss Ryan returned my visit very soon; and I told the servant to open the piano for her, in case she felt like playing.

She began to play after a while—such soft, pretty music.

One fancied a quiet little woman like Minnie playing it.

She was still playing when I came in the parlour, her face bent over the instrument, an intent look upon it as near sadness as her face could assume.

But, after all, it was more intent and earnest than melancholy.

"You play charmingly," I said. "What an accomplished girl you are!"

"My music does not amount to much."

"It suits me better than anything else you do—or that I have seen or heard you do."

"That is odd." She looked up at me inquiringly. Presently: "I know that my drawing is mediocre; I could never earn a living by it."

But I rather think I could succeed on the stage."

"Oh, yes. Your good looks would disarm a great deal of hostile criticism."

"I should like the life; the excitement. I depend a great deal upon excitement."

A day or so after that, Walter told me that Miss Ryan had lost her office.

He came and sat down near my writing-table, and interrupted the letter I was in the midst of.

He looked grave and preoccupied.

"What will she do?" I wondered. "Try to get it back?"

"No. She talks of going on the stage."

"I am not surprised."

"By Jove, what a life for a woman—that is, until she has attained a certain height in the profession."

"She won't mind it as much as some others. Upon the whole, she will prefer it to tracing."

"Laura, I have made up my mind to ask her to share my lot. Not a very brilliant one, but still perhaps she would be better off than fighting the battle of life singlehanded."

"Walter, she will not make a good wife."

"Lollie, I don't care whether she does or not. I am afraid I will make her only an indifferently good husband."

"Walter, I don't believe she'll have you."

This was my last shot. I was sure it would tell, however, with a man like Walter—proud, perhaps a little vain, poor old fellow; the kind of man who considers it a humiliation to be refused by a woman.

He flushed all over his sensitive face.

"Of course one never can tell," he said, slowly. "But I must take my chances."

The next day, in the afternoon, Miss Ryan came to see me. I was dressed to pay some visits, and was about to step into the carriage. I proposed returning to the house.

"No," she said, "I won't detain you. I will call again—or, rather—"

"Suppose you drive with me?" I said, compromising.

"Oh, thank you. You always think of the nicest thing." Then, as we drove off, "Your brother came to see me this morning."

"Are you going to be my sister?"

"No, Mrs. Wood. I am sure you are relieved. You do not want your dear Walter to marry a creature like me, half Bohemian, half adventures. And, fortunately for me, he could not tempt me. I have no drawing towards a tame, quiet married life. Are you angry with me?"

"No," I said. "Only surprised, and sorry for Walter. Was he heart-broken?"

"He professed to be. I did not expect it of him. I am hopelessly worldly myself, and I do not look for better things in others. Your consolation may be, Mrs. Wood, that if he had married me, his infatuation would not have outlasted the honeymoon."

"I know it is your theory, you poor girl."

"It is truth for me, Mrs. Wood; no theory at all. I have no heart to satisfy a man with, after the first passion has spent itself. I might have had once. I once loved someone madly. I tell you this, because I fancy it will make you think better of me. But that is all over now. So change the subject. I came to bid you goodbye this afternoon. I am going away with my grandfather for a while. I mean to make a theatrical engagement. You will hear of me next as Miss Aletta Montague or Plantagenet, or some of the other high-sounding theatrical names."

I sighed. She was ever so much taller than myself, even so much more independent.

Walter dined with us that day, and when we two were alone for a moment or so after dinner I told him that I had seen her, and what she had said.

"Going to-morrow morning? She never told me that. I must go and say good-bye." And he rose forthwith.

"I would not go if I were you. If she had cared to see you again, I am sure she would have let you know. I fancy she wanted to spare you both the pain of saying farewell."

"I would rather see her. There may be something I can do for her."

I would much rather he had stayed. I hated him to be dragged after her chariot wheels, as it were.

I was afraid she would construe his coming again into a re-urging of his suit. But I said nothing farther.

Afterwards he told me that he found Mr. Mills, a millionaire, with her, and that he was seeing to Miss Ryan's last arrangement for her.

"Mr. Mills," I repeated. "I wonder why, in the face of such a brilliant possibility as capturing his millions, Miss Ryan is going away. However, she shows her cleverness, perhaps, in going. Mr. Mills may be excited into a hotter pursuit. Depend upon it, she knows what she is about."

"You talk like a designing, scheming old woman of the world," cried Walter. "It is perfectly disgusting."

"I don't think badly of Miss Ryan, either. I like her. Only I do expect to see her Mrs. Mills yet."

Walter survived his disappointment. In my secret soul I gradually made up my mind that it was good for him.

He worked harder at his profession in consequence than I had ever known him to do before.

People are apt to seek relief from disappointed love or ambition in work.

We never talked about Miss Ryan. I thought of her sometimes.

I wondered how she was succeeding where she was.

Once I asked Mr. Mills, out of mere curiosity, whether he had heard anything of her since she left. He replied, rather eagerly:

"No, he had not." Had I?

And then the conversation dropped.

One day when I returned from a lunch party, I was told that a poor woman had been to see me, had left her address, and begged that I would come to her without delay; she was in great need. What a long drive it was.

Finally we drew up before a shabby little house.

I got out and rang the bell myself. The wire was broken.

I rapped. No answer. I was almost palsied with cold now, as I stood beaten about in a sharp, angry wind, a mockery of fashionable gaiety in my cream-coloured silk over black velvet, my light gloves and my flower bonnet, which array I would gladly have exchanged for a double blanket shawl.

Finally, a woman's head was thrust out of a window of the next house.

"If it's looking for Mrs. Mason yees are, she's not in."

"Yes. Mrs. Mason is the name I was told to ask for. Out? The person who called said she was very sick."

"It's not Mrs. Mason whose sick. It's the woman who is living with her. She has a fever. Out of her head, they tell me. Are yees acquainted with her?"

"No. But I came to see her. Couldn't I get in?"

"No. The door's locked. It's a pity, too. That woman's right sick. Visiting the poor, are you?"

"This woman asked me to come and see her," I said, my teeth chattering. "So I came." A pause. The wind seemed to be blowing away my wits. "May I come in your house and wait a while?"

"Yes, you may, and welcome;" and she came down, unlocked the door, and let me in. "I'm sorry I can't ask you where there's a fire; but my boy's got the diphthery upstairs, and I reckon you'd be afear'd of it."

I tried my best to stop chattering, but it amounted this time to a nervous chill. My hostess picked up an old shawl, as I seated myself, and put it around me.

"I'm rale sorry you're so cold," she said.

"Oh, never mind," she answered. "I'll stay here, please. I've no doubt it will be more prudent for me not to go upstairs."

I waited and waited, until I was sure that my guests were beginning to arrive, and that I ought to be on hand to receive them.

I called out good-bye and thank you to my hostess, who had returned to her sick child. She came down again to see me off.

She urged me to wear home her shawl, and I gratefully accepted her offer, promising to bring it back next day, when I would again come to see Mrs. Mason.

"Tell her I'll be here at ten o'clock," was my parting words. Then to myself, "Very strange that she should be willing to leave that sick woman locked up alone all this while."

My chill was succeeded by a high fever when I reached home. By midnight I was so ill that it was necessary to send for a doctor; and I continued desperately ill for a week or ten days.

I was under the influence of anodynes for several days, during which poor Mrs. Mason and her sick inmate faded out of my mind.

As soon as I rallied my scattered faculties, I wrote a note to a friend, asking her to investigate the matter for me, and give what help was needed.

My friend wrote me word in reply—I was too weak to see anyone—that she went to the address I sent her, but that the people had moved.

I sent a servant to find out where they had moved, but their neighbours could give no information on the subject.

At last I was able to go out myself. I drove straight to my unknown friend of the shawl, to whom I returned her property—overlooked until then—with many apologies, accompanying it with a basket of delicacies for her sick boy, who was still in bed.

Then I cross-examined the woman as to Mrs. Mason.

She had moved away the day after I was there. The sick girl had gone too. They had put her in a hack; she looked awfully bad, poor thing.

Mrs. Mason was turned out, because she couldn't pay her rent. Didn't know where she had gone. Never had had much to say to her.

"Can't you give me any idea? Has she no friends in the neighbourhood?"

"Couldn't say. Not as I know. Let's see. She has a son—I'll tell you. He has an orange stand in front of a theatre. He might tell you where his mother is. And, come to think of it, she has a daughter, too. Been sick yourself? Pity. Well, hope you'll find her. Needs help bad enough, I reckon."

I was writing down the two addresses.

"Ned Mason, did you say? And the daughter is, Mrs. Dunn?"

"Yes. As near as I can remember. Wish you luck. Good-day to you."

Thus sped on my way, I took a fresh departure. I was possessed by a morbid desire to find these people.

It seemed to me that I must find them. In my mind I was conjuring up all sorts of horrors that might befall them before I could get to them. It had been so cold. So poor that they could not pay the rent! Perhaps the sick person had died.

Ned Mason was not carrying on his trade at the theatre. Another peanut vendor, who was there, stated that Ned had moved farther down. This merchant could give me no information whatever as to Ned's family connections. There was nothing for it but to pursue the search farther.

I went to Mrs. Dunn's next, as the nearer point. Mrs. Dunn proved to be a laundress who was up to her elbows in hot suds. She promptly gave me her mother's address.

"Yes, Miss 'Letta was still with ma. Had been awful sick; but was better now."

"Miss 'Letta?"

"Yes; Miss 'Letta Ryan. Ma raised Miss 'Letta. Thought you knew her, from yer asking about a sick person, miss."

I was thunderstruck. But there might be two Miss Aletta Ryan's, after all. Mrs. Dunn pursued:

"Her gran'ma died suddenly, jist as she was goin' away—General Briban, he was. And so

Miss 'Letta she stayed on with ma. Bilious fever she's had, but she's about agin now."

Mrs. Dunn was a very pretty-faced, pleasant-voiced woman.

She accompanied me all the way down to the street door, with minute directions as to finding her mother.

I knocked at the door of the room, finally, where I was told I would find Mrs. Mason, with a beating heart.

I entered, in response to a "come in," a small room, opening into a smaller room, a bed in each, a cooking-stove in the first.

A middle-aged woman, so light she might easily be mistaken for white, sat at a sewing-machine.

I explained my errand, Mrs. Mason first insisting upon my taking a seat.

"Yes," Mrs. Mason said, slowly, "I went for you. A lady I saw for told me you were a charitable lady, and good to the poor. I was out the day you called. Then we moved. Miss 'Letta she was real put out when she heard I'd been to you. She didn't want any of her acquaintances here to know her circumstances. The general he died. She got the telegram when the man was a cordin' her trunk. She was struck all of a heap. I happened to be there—had come to see her off. I took care of Miss 'Letta, you see, ma'am, from a child, and she's like my own child, so to speak. She was half sick, too, that mornin'—not fit to set off on a journey, let alone see to funerals and undertakers. So she telegraphs back that she is too ill to leave, and I took her with me to my little place. Bless you, ma'am, she give right up. She was at death's door for two weeks."

"I hope you have not been in need of anything. I am sorry I did not get here sooner. I have been sick myself."

"Thank you, ma'am; we managed along. There was the back rent to pay on the other place. 'Twas that bothered me, because I didn't want her to be turned out, sick as she was. I paid 'em the little she had laid by, to pacify 'em; but even that didn't prevent they puttin' us out of doors before they'd done, since I couldn't pay all. Still we managed along. She wrote as soon as she could use her hand, and there's a little money comin' to her from the old general she can pay the doctor with. And she has found somethin' to do, too. In the theatre," Mrs. Mason added.

The words had barely left her lips when Miss Ryan entered—started with surprise, and perhaps discomfiture; but finally decided to make the best of it.

"So it is not so easy to bury oneself alive as I thought," she said.

"You foolish girl, I replied, "why didn't you come to me?"

I realised fully that Miss Ryan had been very wise, as far as Mr. Mills was concerned, in remaining in seclusion when Fortune did not smile upon her.

He was a man who was in sympathy with success.

Conspicuousness in any way attracted him as a child is attracted by a gilded toy.

Aletta was endowed with a double charm when she became the admiration of hundreds.

Aletta was wise and clever. She knew that success makes success.

She came to see me when I was on the eve of leaving town for the summer.

She was very gay and gorgeous, and before she bade me good-bye she told me that she was engaged to be married to Mr. Mills.

Minnie is going to be married, too, in spite of her being a middle-aged maiden lady in Walter's eyes.

I shall never forgive Walter for that. Minnie is only two years older than I am myself.

Walter accepted his disappointment philosophically when I told him the news about Aletta Ryan.

But that is his disposition. He takes things as they come.

At the bottom of his heart, I am convinced that he cherishes a sentimental regard for her still. And why not? In this matter-of-fact

world perhaps we are all of us the better for our illusions.

And, after all, I deliberately pronounce Miss Ryan charming, in spite of her shams. Who knows? If life is kind to her, she may shed those shams yet, as a ripe fruit sheds its husk.

M. L.

FACETIE.

JOSH BILLING'S LATEST.

An enthusiast is an individual who believes about 4 times as much as he can prove, and proves about four times as much as enny-body else believes. Nature seldom makes a phool; she simply furnishes the raw material, and lets the feller finish the job to suit himself.

Young man, learn to wait; if you undertake to set a hen before she is ready you will lose your time and confuse the hen besides. When you have bored the bull's eye, set down and keep still; folks will think then that you ken hit it any time you have a mind to.

I don't rekollect or ever doing enny thing that I was just a little ashamed of but wat sumebody remembered it, and was sure once in a while to put me in mind of it. —Fun.

A SETTLEMENT.

IRBITATED CREDITOR (to debtor): "When are we going to have a settlement?"

BLAND DEBTOR: "My dear sir, we had a settlement last week."

I. C.: "Nonsense! How do you make that out?"

B. D.: "Why, when we met at your abop, we meant to settle, didn't we?"

I. C. (gruffly): "Yes, but——"

B. D. (interrupting): "Very well, then, that was a settlement, wasn't it?"

Bland Debtor walks off, leaving Iritated Creditor speechless.

CALCULATION.

"WHAT is the matter?" asked a lawyer of his coachman.

"The horses are running away, sir."

"Can you not pull them up?"

"I'm afraid not."

"Then," said the lawyer, after judicial delay, "run into something cheap."

ANY WAY.

SCENE: Inverness photographer's studio.

ARTIST (facetiously to Highlander): "Oh, yes, can take you any way you like—upside, downside, inside, or outside, full size or half size, sitting or standing—any way, any way, sir, and all for one shilling."

HIGHLANDER (artfully): "May be you konna de her any way noo?"

ARTIST (with gusto): "Yes, any way; if not, I'll take you for nothing."

Adjusts camera and puts Highlander in position.

"Now, please, look here."

Highlander looks there, at the same time with a grin marches up and down.

ARTIST: "But you mustn't walk about in that way. You must——"

HIGHLANDER: "No-ta-tall. I want her to be took walking."

The artist had to fulfil his promise.

EPICURAL.

As a man and his horse had just tarried one day

At an inn, and the ostler was bringing some hay,

Says the man, "It must be very ick-some indeed

With bit in their mouths for the horses to feed."

"Not at all," says the ostler. "Unless I'm a sinner

I've a bit in my mouth every day at my dinner."

CULTURE.

"But you know, pa," said the farmer's daughter, when he spoke to her about the

addresses of his neighbour's son, "you know, pa, that ma wants me to marry a man of culture!"

"So do I, my dear, so do I, and there's no better culture in the country than agriculture."

"THE R. H. A."

Mrs. SHODDY (who has rung for her cook): "Mrs. Simmer, I saw an officer going down my are". Now, I will not allow this!"

COOK: "Lor', mum, you can't object to that, m'am—It is only my son in the R'yal 'Os Artillery, just gazetted bombardier, he says, m'am, and come to show his uniform!" —Punch.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS.

AUNT FLORENCE: "And can you read yet, Ruth?"

RUTH: "I should think so, indeed; and I know Geography, and History, and sums, and I've got two second teeth!" —Punch.

FEMININE LOGIC.

BUSINESS-LIKE WIFE: "I'm sure you charge too much for your pictures, my love, beautiful as they are. If you were to ask a quarter the price, you would sell twice as many!" —Punch.

REVENGE!

NORTH COUNTRY LABOURER (who has been engaged to dig): "They that eat alone may howl alone!" These archiblogical chaps never so much as asked me if ah'd tak' anything, and while they're havin' their dinners ah've found the "buryn'"—(pockets turn and several flint arrow-heads)—"and they may whistle for't!" —Punch.

DOWN ON HIM.

"GIRLS have no sense of humour!"

Edwin cried,

When Angelina smiled not at his chaffing.

"You men are so ridiculous," she replied;

"If we had much, we should be always laughing." —Punch.

DEATH HARDLY WORSE THAN LIFE.

The young lady who died of grief because her betrothed turned out to be a counterfeiter, found, at least, an early end to a life which had been made irretrievably wretched.

There could not well be a more unhappy fate than that of a proud, hopeful girl who suddenly discovers the young man in whom she had so much confidence as to plight to him her troth, instead of being all that she believed him, is a wilful, deliberate criminal, capable of engaging in the detestable occupation of counterfeiting the coin of his country—an offence particularly calculated to injure the poor.

Sad as the premature death of a beautiful and accomplished young woman is, in this case it seems hardly more to be dreaded than the life that was before her.

STATISTICS.

TELEGRAPHY AT HOME AND ABROAD.—The International Telegraph Office at Bern has just completed the publication of the statistics which it has been able to collect. These statistics apply to the year 1876. The statistics given as to the length of the lines constructed and worked by the various administrations show that among the State Telegraph Departments Russia is pre-eminent, having a total of 56,000 miles of line, of which 9,000 miles are in Asia. France ranks next with 34,000 miles of line, while Germany (including Bavaria and Wurtemberg) has 30,000 miles, Austria-Hungary 29,000 miles, England 25,000 miles, India 17,670 miles, and Italy 14,000 miles. The proportion of miles of wire to miles of line

varies very greatly in different countries. While the Russian telegraph lines carry, on the average, only two wires, the lines in this country carry, on the average, four wires and a half. The result of this difference is shown in the statistics of miles of wire, where England heads all other States with a total of 113,000 miles. Russia and Germany rank next with 112,000 miles each, France has 90,000 miles, Austria-Hungary 84,000 miles, Italy 49,000 miles, and India 29,000 miles. The Government Telegraph Departments, however, are all eclipsed in length, both of line and of wire, by the Western Union Telegraph Company, which has 77,000 miles of line and 190,000 miles of wire.

AMONG THE ROSES.

Now softly fold the rosy glooms of even

About the gleaming West;

The blue sea rocks beneath the smiling heaven

The young moon on her breast;

The reed-like piping of the meadow cricket

Thrills in the odorous gloom;

The breeze shakes from the oleander thicket

A shower of scented bloom;

All to herself the garden fountain singing

Beneath the summer moon,

Pours her libation with a faint clear ringing

Like crystal bells in tune;

Come forth, Nanine! the snowy-starred clematis

Hives all her sweets for thee

In brimming flagons; and the roses wait

us

Beneath the trysting tree.

Hark! from the belfry chimes the curfew

hour

Beyond the woody hill;

Some restless bird chirps in the leafy

bower,

Then all the world is still:

So still I hear the faint melodious tinkle

Upon the terrace stair

Of little tripping feet, I catch the twinkle

Of floating yellow hair;

I see the pretty head of sunny brightness,

The shape of airy grace,

So like a lily in its slender whiteness;

The drooping flower-face;

So fair and sweet as she, the modest daisies

Beneath her tiny feet,

The timid hare-bells in the ferny mazes

Are not so fair and sweet.

Her gentle presence thrills the conscious

roses

With tremors of delight;

A finer fragrance haunts the dewy closes

Of the impassioned night.

She comes, my own! A softer, saintlier

glory

Folds heaven and earth, as we

Take up the golden thread of Love's sweet

story,

Beneath the trysting tree. E. A. B.

GEMS.

THE cries of the poor never enter into the ears of the covetous man; or, if they do, he has always one ear ready to let them out than the other to take them in.

THE world is governed by three things—wisdom, authority, and appearances. Wisdom is for thoughtful people, authority for rough people, and appearances for the great mass of superficial people who can look only at the outside.

WHAT a blessing to the household is a merry, cheerful woman—one whose spirits are not affected by wet days and little disappointments, and whose milk of human kindness does not sour in the sunshine of human prosperity.

THE loftiest, the most angel-like ambition is

the earnest desire to contribute to the rational happiness and moral improvement of others. If we do this—if we can smooth the rugged path of one fellow-traveller—if we can give one good impression, is it not better than all the triumphs that wealth and power ever attained?

HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

SILVER PIE.—One large potatoe, peeled and grated; add the juice and rind of a lemon to the white of an egg, well beaten; add one cup of sugar and one cup of water; beat well together and bake in a dish with one crust. When done, beat the whites of three eggs with half a cup of fine sugar and pour over the top and set it in the oven to brown.

SOAP-SUDS AND TENT CATERPILLARS.—A correspondent says: I neglected to examine my orchard in time to discover and destroy the tent caterpillar in the egg season, consequently I had to destroy this pest at a later and more troublesome stage. I have found that soap-suds are an effective remedy. I make a swab of cloth on a long, slim handle; dipping this in a pail of strong soap-suds, I go over the trees, giving every nest a thorough soaking. The early morning is the time to use the swab, as the worms are then in their nest.

HARD SAUCE FOR PUDDINGS.—Stir to cream one cup of butter, and three cups of powdered sugar; when light, beat in the juice of a lemon and two teaspoonsful of nutmeg.

CURRY LOBSTER.—One cup of hot water, quarter of a cup of butter, two spoonfuls of flour, one spoonful of curry powder, pepper, salt, and one cup of cream. Cut the lobster in small pieces; stir all the above ingredients together, adding the soft part of the lobster; put it on the fire, giving it one boil; then put in the lobster, and let it simmer two minutes.

MISCELLANEOUS.

THE Emperor of Germany has acceded to Queen Victoria's wish that the marriage of the Princess Louise of Prussia with the Duke of Connaught should be solemnised in England.

THERE is a French beggar on one of the Paris bridges who has just started a new breast-plate, with the following painted thereon—"Have had—children, 7; wives, 3; mothers-in-law, 3; battles and engagements, 6—19." You stop and ask him "Nineteen what?" He replies, "Nineteen claims on your purse, kind sir."

A NEW rope-making material has been found in the fibrous leaves of a New Zealand aloe. The long tough threads are said to exceed iron wire of the same thickness in tenacity, and it is perfectly unalterable in salt water.

THE following noblemen and baronets have been on the half-pay list since the following dates. Captains—Sir Richard King, Bart., 1826; Viscount Arbuthnot, 1830; the Hon. H. Grey, 1830; and the Duke of Richmond and Gordon, K.G., 1830. Lieutenant—Hon J. Curzon, 1827. Sub Lieutenants—The Hon. G. C. G. Berkeley, 1816; and Lord Teynham, 1816.

THE boat in which the Andrews brothers started from Boston for Europe is only 15 feet long on the water-line, and is smaller than any vessel that has ever sailed across the Atlantic. She has one short mast, with a lateen sail and a square sail. She is decked over, and has two small hatchways, in one of which the steersman sits. The provisions consist in the main of dried and canned meat and vegetables, with sixty gallons of water in kegs, which will serve as ballast, the kegs being filled with salt water as fast as emptied of fresh water. A large canvas globe with 100 feet of rope attached, is carried for the purpose of anchorage. This will be thrown overboard in case of a storm. The two adventurers are to be liberally paid if they reach this side, by a showman who will exhibit them in Paris and elsewhere.

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NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

FLORA.—The articles should be simply washed with soap and warm water.

H. E.—On the third or little finger, whichever it will fit.

WILLIAM G.—It is a popular error to suppose that a notice to quit must be given before 12 a.m. Any time between sunrise and sunset is recognised by the law.

N. B. S.—You are at liberty to forward your original tale to the Editor, who will, if he accepts the same, remunerate you by agreement.

LUNOS.—The swimming in your head after bathing in the evening is Nature's hint that it is not beneficial to you. Try bathing before breakfast.

A CONSTANT READER.—There are so many books on etiquette for both ladies and gentlemen that you cannot fail to obtain one at any bookseller's.

LILIAN D.—1. A mole is a slight malformation of nature, and must not be interfered with. 2. Retain your position in the pew, and allow new-comers to pass you. Handwriting plain and uniform, therefore good.

GEORGE.—There is no book published on the subject; neither is there any definite rule observed. You may, however, safely conclude that the parties, upon consideration, do not desire to proceed any further in the matter.

JULY.—1. The colour of your hair, per sample sent us, is decidedly red, a shade lighter than Rose's. 2. Wording of note and writing very fair. 3. A really attractive and genuine girl need never fear that the colour of her hair will detract from the chances of securing a worthy husband.

HORTICULTURAL.—You have confounded two varieties: Summer spinach has a round leaf and a round seed; winter spinach has a spiked triangular seed, and its leaf is also triangular; each is good in its season. Of course one must be sown in the autumn—the other in the spring.

CLARA.—The isothermal lines are not coincident with the parallels of longitude. Other causes besides distance from the equator operate in determining the temperature of different parts of the globe. Altitude, presence or absence of forests or deserts, proximity to the ocean, &c., are all modifying causes. Consult a good physical atlas, of which there are several.

T. B.—The solution of discoloured silver colours with the light; it would not if kept in the dark. The best remedy we know of is to get some pure kaolin (china clay) in powder and shake up well with the discoloured solution and filter with filtering paper. Try a little, say an ounce, of your solution first, then, if you succeed, you may safely do the whole.

HARRY L.—Not having an opportunity of hearing the other side we decline to express an opinion on the matter. We suggest, however, that you should personally call at the office to which the money was sent; there you should explain the idea that was present to your mind when you sent the money, and ask that it should be returned to you if it appear that you misapprehended the terms of the advertisement to which you refer.

VIOLET.—The duties of a lady's-maid are various—principally to attend to and keep in repair her mistress's wardrobe and make plain dresses, &c. to dress and arrange her hair and perform other little duties too numerous to mention. Salary, £13 to £40. 2. Corsets may give a fashionable appearance to the figure, but give rise to a great many ailments. 3. You must not be in love with a gentleman whose inconstancy is so conspicuous. If he admits he was wrong and is really fond of you we would advise you to overlook his temporary delinquency.

WINTER.—The curious apple is simply the effect of abnormal growth, one portion of the fruit developing and ripening sooner than the other. The sweet and sour portions show the contrast between ripe and unripe fruit. By keeping a specimen a sufficient time this fact will appear. The suture between the parts is also produced by one part having an earlier and larger development. Splitting a bud could not produce the effect. Even if it could be made to grow it would only produce on each side a limb bearing fruit according to its kind. Trees of the greenish apple are sometimes subject to this unnatural growth of the fruit, and the contrast between the ripe and unripe parts is of course strongly marked.

HENRY and HARRY, two seamen in the Royal Navy, would like to correspond with two young ladies with a view to matrimony. Respondents must be good-looking, fond of children.

JOHN, twenty-three, medium height, brown hair, dark grey eyes, fond of home, would like to correspond with a young lady about his own age.

E. A., twenty-two, tall, fair, dark blue eyes, domesticated, would like to correspond with a young gentleman with a view to matrimony. Must be twenty-five, dark hair and eyes.

F. J. W., thirty-seven, would like to correspond with a lady about thirty.

ALICE and ANNIE, two friends, would like to correspond with two seamen in the Royal Navy. Alice is twenty-one, fair, fond of home. Annie is eighteen, fair, fond of children.

LOVELY GEORGE, twenty, good-looking, medium height, of a loving disposition, fond of home, would like to correspond with a young lady.

WILLIAM B. would like to correspond with a young lady about twenty-two.

GEORGE and CONNY, two friends, wish to correspond with two young men—mechanics. Conny is twenty-six, fair, of a loving disposition. George is seventeen, thoroughly domesticated, fair.

W. R. L. and E. C. M., two seamen in the Royal Navy, would like to correspond with two young ladies with a view to matrimony. W. R. L. is nineteen, of a loving disposition, tall. E. C. M. is twenty, dark, black eyes, medium height.

LOVELY MAX, eighteen, would like to correspond with a good-looking, dark young man. One residing near Dover preferred.

OH! BONNIE WEE JENNY.

Oh, Bonnie wee Jenny,
I maun noo reveal
The feelings I still
Wad fain try to conceal;
Ye are always sae winsome
And pleasant to see,
That my heart noo has left me
And wandered to thee.

It's lang I resisted—
But what was the use?
I couldna weel hold
What Cupid let loose;
See, you souse bit crater,
I noo dare confess,
That I lo'e thee wi' love
That grows mair—never less.

I see nae a flower but
I think o' yerse!
And a' the birds that
Are doon i' the dell;
When they're singing their songs
To the dowers in dew
They a' do remind me
Sweet Jenny, o' you.

Ah, Jenny, be thochtfu',
And think just awae—
I am sure in yer heart
Ye ha'e some love for me;
Sae gae to my arm, and
While wrapt in oor bliss,
We'll seal a' oor vows
In a heartsome bit kiss.

It's nae use stravaigin
And gaun against Fate,
For Jenny, ye ken, yer
Tae be my bit mate;
Oh, joys o' the future,
The I canna see,
There is muckle in store
For my Jenny and me.

E. B. N.

H. P. A. and H. S. H., two sailors in the Royal Navy, would like to correspond with two young ladies with a view to matrimony. H. P. A. is eighteen, fair, blue eyes, of a loving disposition. H. S. H. is eighteen, medium height, hazel eyes, dark.

B. F. and S. H., two friends, would like to correspond with two young men. B. F. is twenty, tall, brown hair, dark eyes, fond of home. S. H. is twenty-four, medium height, dark brown hair, dark eyes, and very fond of music.

EMILY and CLARA, two friends, would like to correspond with two young gentlemen. Emily is thirty-two, medium height, dark hair and eyes. Clara is twenty-three, tall, light blue eyes, thoroughly domesticated. Respondents must be about the same age.

NETTIE, seventeen, light hair, blue eyes, of a loving disposition, would like to correspond with a gentleman loving and fond of home.

DICKIE, nineteen, brown hair, good-looking, would like to correspond with a young lady about seventeen, fond of home.

T. L., L. D., and T. M., three friends, would like to correspond with three young ladies. T. L. is nineteen, of a loving disposition, light hair, hazel eyes. L. D. is twenty-one, dark, medium height, fond of home. T. M. is nineteen, tall, dark, brown hair, fond of home and music. Respondents must be about nineteen, of loving dispositions.

L. R. and D. D., two friends, would like to correspond with two young ladies. L. R. is nineteen, fair, dark hair and eyes, tall. D. D. is twenty-one, good-looking, dark hair and eyes.

CLARE and THEA, two friends, would like to correspond with two young men with a view to matrimony. Clare is twenty, tall, dark. Thea is eighteen, loving, fair, thoroughly domesticated. Respondents must be about twenty.

N. M. and H. N., two friends, would like to correspond with two young ladies. N. M. is twenty-two, of medium height, fair, loving. H. N. is twenty, tall, dark, good-looking.

F. C. R., twenty-four, fair, dark hair, hazel eyes, and medium height, wishes to correspond with a gentleman. Must be good-looking.

MARIE ANTOINETTE would like to correspond with a young man. She is twenty, fair, dark brown curly hair, dark grey eyes. Respondent must be about twenty-four, handsome.

F. L. and H. L., two friends, would like to correspond with two young men. F. L. is seventeen, light hair, blue eyes, medium height. H. L. is eighteen, medium height, dark hair, dark brown eyes, loving, fond of home and children.

R. G., twenty-two, brown hair, hazel eyes, of a loving disposition, would like to correspond with a gentleman. Must be about twenty-five, dark, fond of home, and blue eyes.

CISSY, nineteen, dark hair and eyes, would like to correspond with a young gentleman about the same age, fond of home.

HENRY, tall, fair, blue eyes, good-looking, would like to correspond with a young lady. Must be dark and good-looking.

WILLIAM IV., a seaman in the Royal Navy, would like to correspond with a young lady with a view to matrimony. He is twenty-two, dark, good-tempered, and good-looking.

MYRA W., twenty-four, fond of home and children, loving, golden hair, blue eyes, would like to correspond with a young man about twenty-eight, dark hair, brown eyes, good-looking, medium height, fond of home and children.

TIMOTHY, nineteen, tall, dark hair, hazel eyes, dark, good-tempered, wishes to correspond with a young lady with a view to matrimony. Respondent must be about eighteen.

G. and N., two friends, would like to correspond with two young men with a view to matrimony. G. is nineteen, domesticated, fond of music. N. is twenty-two, good-tempered.

B. C. and W. F., two friends, would like to correspond with two young gentlemen. B. C. is nineteen, dark hair, blue eyes, fond of home and music, of a loving disposition. W. F. is twenty-two, light hair, blue eyes, fond of home and children.

COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED:

A. W. is responded to by—E. J. F., twenty-one, fair, good-looking.

K. B. by—Minnie, G., nineteen, dark, medium height, fond of home.

PATTY by—Edward S., twenty, brown hair, blue eyes, fair.

POLLY by—J. W. B., medium height.

ELLEN by—Electric Light, twenty, curly hair, medium height, fond of home.

ANNIE by—Whitworth Gun, twenty-three, good-looking, fond of home and children.

MINNIE by—Arthur.

ALFRED by—May, seventeen, light hair, blue eyes, and of medium height.

AMERICAN PLANTER by—E. H. D., twenty-one, medium height, domesticated.

CHARLEY by—Dora.

K. B. by—Gena, nineteen, dark hair and eyes, fond of home, tall, of a loving disposition.

POLLY by—A. B.

DORA by—J. C.

MARY by—Union Jack, twenty-five, dark.

NELL by—Jack, handsome, tall, dark blue eyes, fond of children.

G. D. C. by—Harwell, twenty-one, dark.

JESSIE by—Harry Bluff, a seaman in the Royal Navy, thirty, blue eyes.

CHUMER BLOCK by—Lizzie, twenty, dark hair, hazel eyes.

H. R. by—Amans.

M. L. D. by—Florrie, seventeen, tall, dark hair, hazel eyes, fond of home.

JOE by—Casabiancha, nineteen, fond of home.

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